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# DRAMATICS

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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

VOL. XXXII No. 6

MARCH, 1961

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EDWARD FULLER

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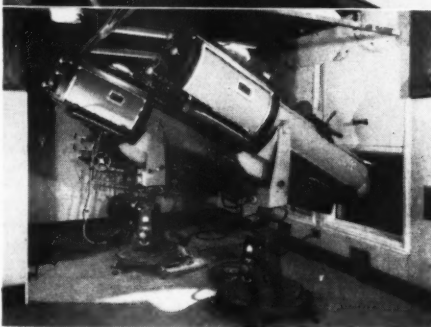
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**EDWARD** Fuller is Troupe 479's second nomination this current school year for our Thespian of the Month. Inspired from his educative experiences in his high school theater, Mr. Fuller chose the commercial theater for his life's work. From bit parts in Broadway shows, he rose to an assistant director and then finally to sole director and producer. Lucille Lee, sponsor of this troupe at Rayen High School, Youngstown, Ohio, is proud of her two Thespians of the Month, Joseph Flynn and Edward Fuller.

**KATHERYN** Offill, sponsor of Thespian Troupe 1355, Lynwood, Calif., High School, in collaboration with Marc Ross, Chairman of Speech at Long Beach, Calif., Polytechnic High School, wrote and produced an original musical comedy at Lynwood last year entitled *Gangway!* Marylou Peterson of Lynwood High, blessed with exceptional musical talent, became the third member of this team. The article, *Gangway!—Venture and Adventure*, written by Miss Offill, tells the success story of this production—an all original musical—music, lines, scenery, lighting, dancing. Thespian sponsors interested in original scores, may find *Gangway!* to be just what they are looking for. Although not published, Miss Offill may have available scripts.

**DRUCILLA** J. Stillwagon, Thespian Indiana State Director and sponsor of Thespian Troupe 1537, Central High School, Muncie, Indiana, in her article *Reveries*, has an encouraging message for all drama directors. The article is a summary of achievement about her students now in the commercial theater and about those in other walks of life. Here is practical proof in one school that all young people should have the opportunity to participate in educative theater. Why not write your own *Reveries*? It will be a factual score sheet of your accomplishments to the community, the school, and most important to the young people with whom you come in contact in your high school theater.

**I**N OUR two series this month Dr. Carmack's subject is *Original Oratory*; Dr. Dusenbury's, *The "Barnum" of the Movies: Cecil B. DeMille*. Our departments feature the following: Plays of the Month, *The Red House Mystery*, *The Thread That Runs So True*, *Dino*, and *Pygmalion*; Theater for Children, *Choosing the Children's Play*; Brief Views, further reviews of the technical aspects of the theater.

**FINALLY** is of course our Thespian Chatter—student written briefs of Troupes' activities. These reports of activities can be very helpful in play selection, in social activities, in planning club programs, and in Initiation procedures. You will find many helpful suggestions from which you can add further prestige to your entire theater program.

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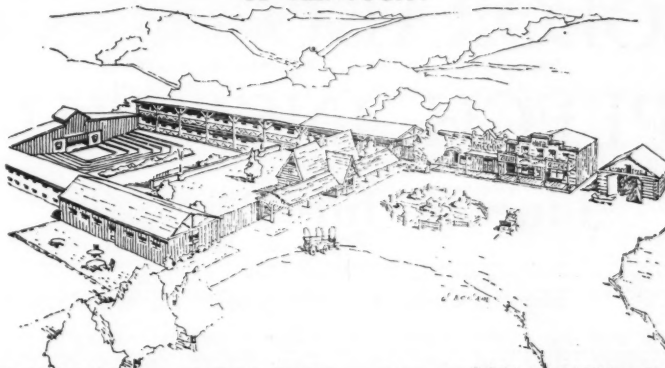
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Jeffrey George, Lakewood, Colorado, was awarded a trophy by the National Thespian Society as Outstanding Drama Student of the 1960 Institute. Shown with him is Ernest E. Pech, director of the Institute's Dramatics Division.

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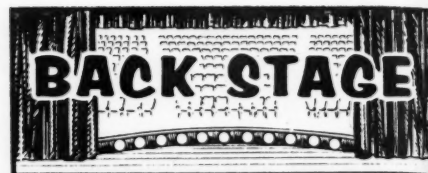
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## ORCHIDS OF THE MONTH

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To Row, Peterson, and Company, Evanston, Illinois, for publishing *Were You There?*, a drama of the Crucifixion by Harold H. Lytle. The Thespian sponsors and student delegates who attended our Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University last June will remember this beautiful and inspiring chorologue which was presented on Wednesday afternoon. If our enthusiastic acceptance of this chorologue helped to get it in print, we are indeed grateful. We recommend Mr. Lytle's work without any reservations.

#### THANK YOU!

AT THE SAA Convention at St. Louis over the Christmas vacation, The National Thespians Society sponsored a panel, "New Ideas in High School Dramatics." Blandford Jennings, Sponsor of Troupe 322, Clayton, Mo., was chairman and Juanita Shearer, National Director and Sponsor of Troupe 872, Brazil, Indiana, was the principal speaker. Assisting Mrs. Shearer were the following high school students: Margaret Whiting and Barbara Soete, Rosati-Kain High School, St. Louis, Mo.; Charles Luedde and Charles Radlo, Horton Watkins High School (Ladue), St. Louis, Mo.; Mike Mefford and Kelly Phillips, East Alton-Wood River High School, Wood River, Ill.; Chelle Siteman and Manuela Dahm, Clayton High School, Clayton, Mo.; and Linda Shearer, Brazil High School, Brazil, Ind.



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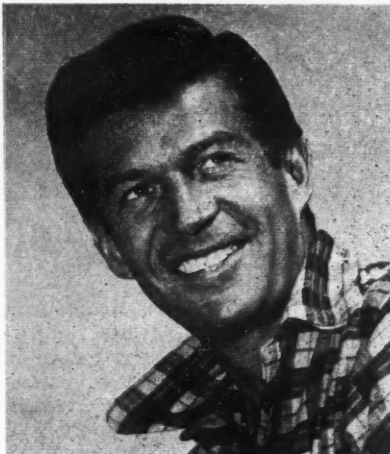
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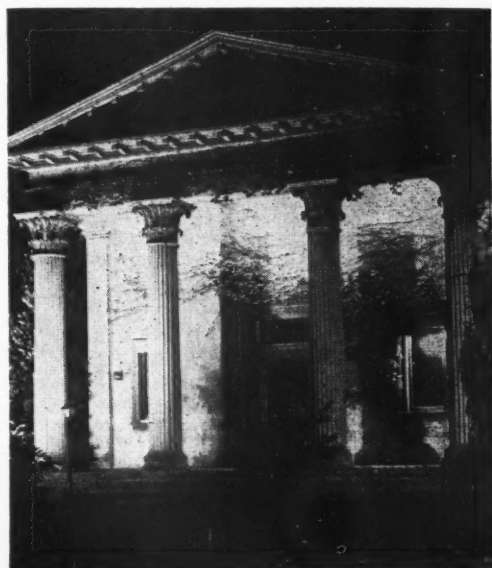
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# EDWARD FULLER

By LUCILLE LEE

"YOUNG MAN IN A HURRY —  
YOUNGSTOWN'S ED FULLER  
TURNS BROADWAY PRODUCER"

As I read this headline in the Youngstown VINDICATOR February 6, 1960, my thoughts sped back to 1942 and a wide-eyed boy sitting in a front seat in the dramatics class. Even then Eddie was serious about dramatics. He was the one in the class who read more than the required number of plays, the one who learned his lines first, the one who was always willing to stay a little longer at rehearsals. He had a genuine interest in and a curiosity about theater in all its phases. Nothing was ever too much for Eddie to do in the interest of dramatics. An amusing incident illustrates this devotion. We were rehearsing *You Can't Take It with You*, in which Eddie had the role of Mr. DiPinna, and the costume committee was having difficulty acquiring a bald-headed wig for DiPinna. To my amazement, one morning Eddie came to the auditorium with the top of his head completely shaved. Since this was in the days before Yul Brynner, it caused considerable stir in the school. Although temporarily banished from the Spanish class, Eddie became quite a hero. All the girls wanted to "pat" his head — to which he had no objection of course. It was the best piece of advertising the play could possibly have had. Eddie was an excellent DiPinna, but his best role in high school, I have always thought, was that of Judah, the youngest son in *The Family Portrait*. His interpretation of the character of Judah was sensitive and convincing — he became Judah.

While in high school, Eddie was president of the Thespian troupe, president of the French Club, a member of NFL, the art club, Spanish club, and history club, and along with all these activities he managed to be a good student. After graduating from Rayen, he studied at Youngstown University by day and haunted the Playhouse by night. Then he left the old home town to make his fortune. Now it is clearly apparent that he is well on the road to success. As proof of this I should like to quote at length from a feature article written by Mr. Fred Childress, drama critic of the Youngstown VINDICATOR, on February 6, 1960. Mr. Childress wrote:



Thespian Edward Fuller

One of my best interviews in New York was with Edward Fuller, a young man in a hurry, who for several years has been chief assistant to David Merrick, New York's most successful producer.

If not quite a celebrity, he soon will be. While I was reviewing the Broadway season, I read in the New York TIMES that he had resigned from Merrick's staff to produce his own shows. His first offering will be *Seville*, an elaborate musical set in the Spanish city during the annual fair visited by Americans. This was my cue to call on Mr. Fuller.

"How do you feel about it?" I asked. Mr. Fuller is 33 years old, a short, determined-looking man with a broad forehead. The interview was in his apartment, which was filled with congratulatory flowers.

"I'm thrilled, naturally," he said. "The New York TIMES? It's marvelous. My telephone's been ringing off the wall ever since the story appeared. Some of the calls were even from people with money."

"Aren't you nervous?" I asked.

"Well," Mr. Fuller said, "not nervous. I'm excited. *Seville* will be a good musical. Robert Russell, who did the book for *Take Me Along*, wrote the show — he adapted it from his own novel — and Lehman Engel will write the music. He's the best musician on Broadway — he's done the orchestrations for dozens of hits."

"When did you first become interested in the theater?" I said.

"I suppose it was while I was at Rayen," Mr. Fuller said. "Then I worked with three directors at the Play-

house. My first show there was *Our Town*. Then I did *Papa Is All* and *Junior Miss*. They were good productions too. Very good. It was a reading from *The Damask Cheek*, which I did at the Playhouse, that got me my first break in New York. Not that it turned out to be much of a break."

"What do you mean?" I said.

"I was one of 3,000 actors who tried out for roles with the Old Vic when it came to New York in 1946," Mr. Fuller said. "It was an open reading, so I did a scene from *The Damask Cheek*. I was one of the 40 who were told to return for a second tryout. We read from the plays the Old Vic was bringing in, for that one, and I was one of the six who were hired. Another was Julie Harris."

"Sounds like quite a break to me," I said.

"I came down with the measles. The only childhood disease I ever had. I never got on the stage — not once. After that I went into advertising."

"How did you get your job with Merrick?" I asked.

"I saw a notice in the newspaper and I asked for it. I didn't know Merrick, and the job had already been given to somebody else, but I went to his office and walked out with it," he said.

Mr. Fuller did 15 shows with Merrick. The first one was *Fanny*, and his first real Broadway experience was turning out the touring company, which played Youngstown. Among the others were *Look Back in Anger*, *Romanoff and Juliet*, *The Entertainer*, *La Plume de Ma Tante*, and *Gypsy*. The last show he did was *Take Me Along*, the current season's smash hit starring Jackie Gleason and Walter Pidgeon, which he worked on with Russell and Engel, who will team with him on *Seville*.

Thus concludes Mr. Childress' article.

Recently Eddie has been in Spain imbibing atmosphere for his first independent production. He writes:

"I am currently in Seville where I am working on the musical. Spain is an extremely lovely country with ideal climate — filled with flowers and heavy perfume. The people are friendly, and Seville is an enchanting city. I hope it will be possible to convey a tiny bit of it to the stage. Even a hint of it will be magnificent."

In the same letter he jokingly mentioned that he works a "48-hour" day. Here I am sure lies the secret of his success. For to the genius and ability which are undoubtedly his he has added the qualities of perseverance, determination, and untiring effort.

It is with pride and pleasure that Troupe 479 of The Rayen School, Youngstown, Ohio, presents as "Thespian of the Month" their fellow-Thespian, Edward Fuller of New York City and Broadway.



# REVERIES

By DRUCILLA J. STILLWAGON

IT IS a rainy Saturday afternoon. I am alone. Standing here on the deserted stage, a strange feeling surrounds me . . . a feeling that comes when one is surrounded by darkness and the emptiness of a large enclosure. The rain is splashing against the window pane and is trickling down into little puddles on the sills.

Suddenly a faint, resounding click tells me the janitor is somewhere on a lower hall and has just dropped his broom on the cement floor. The sound startles me; not so much because it is unexpected as because it sets my thoughts flying.

Looking around once more, I see the age-yellowed stage curtains piled high in one corner. A rickety ladder is lying on its side in front of the upstage wall. Resting rakishly on top of it is a model stage set for *Speaking of Murder*. (I must smile, for the wall pictures and letter used have been taken from illustrations of MAD MAGAZINE.) Stage center is a recently-piled stack of canvas, joyously ripped from the flats when it was learned we were going to get a new set.

Bright lettering covers one side of the canvas. Here, in typical high school fashion, are written such names as Myron McCormick, Mary Jane Croft, Ben Janney, and a young lady who calls herself Mara Lynn, all former Central High School students.

These names probably strike a familiar note. Myron McCormick has ap-

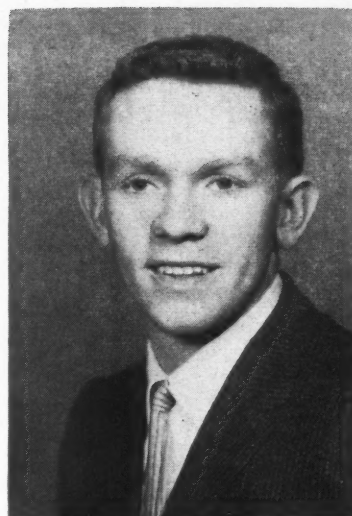
peared onstage, in films, and on TV. He has recently made a half-hour pilot film called "Heave Ho, Harrigan!" which it is hoped will appear soon as a regular TV show. Other performances have included *South Pacific* and *No Time for Sergeants*.

Mary Jane Croft is probably best-noted for her radio role on the "Beulah" show and as the voice of Cleo on "The People's Choice." She has also appeared in "I Love Lucy," "Dragnet," "Our Miss Brooks," "The Eve Arden Show," and numerous other popular shows.

Ben Janney has understudied several roles in Broadway shows, and took a leading role in *Romanoff and Juliet* with Peter Ustinov. He was also production stage manager for that show, as well as for *The Entertainer* with Laurence Olivier. He served in the same capacity for *Destry Rides Again* which starred Andy Griffith.

Mara Lynn is an actress-dancer who has appeared in several popular recent productions on Broadway and television. These are only a few of the several names we see of former students who have made some area of the theater their profession.

And there are other names, too . . . some of recent graduates . . . some students still in school. This one is of a young lady who became an airline stewardess . . . here a boy who became a state champion gymnast and tried out for the Olympic team . . . a young man who became his ship's commander at the age of twenty-three . . . another young man who was killed in Korea . . . a girl whose avocation is with her local Civic Theater . . . a young man whose excess energy brought him before a court of law, but who is now using that energy as one of our country's foremost choreographers . . . a young man studying for the ministry . . . another preparing to be a doctor . . . a young lady



Mike Collins

Chester Award winner for outstanding accomplishments in all areas of drama, Troupe 1537, Central High School, Muncie, Ind.

now married and the mother of three children . . . these and many others . . . each one a link between the past, the present, and the future.

And what of the names of more recent youngsters? Most assuredly, there are those who will become members of the professional theater; but just as important are the names of those whose names we may never hear, but who will be better people through their associations with this wonderful, challenging field. And thinking of these, we can not help going back to the time when we first came here.

It was four years ago. Dramatic interest was low. It was not long before we realized the only reason there was dramatics class was that there always had been one.

For one year we worked to build our equipment and facilities. We tried to establish more of an interest among the students and faculty for this medium. It wasn't easy. It never is. We think, however, our high school probably has an unusual facet of linking together our dramatic arts alumni with current students which gives these students a more positive goal toward which to head.

This link began when we established a dramatics club two years ago, calling it Stage Door. As we wished to emphasize *all* areas of stage productions, we felt this would be an all-inclusive title. (Certainly the importance of the crews can not be over-emphasized!)

As is often found, the primary reason for most drama students was "to be in the play." We have constantly endeavored to show this is not the main thing, but rather to work together to produce an outstanding show, with each doing his assigned task to help add to the total picture.

(Continued on Page 30)



The Continentals and the Counts of Rhythm, Central High School, Muncie, Ind.

# GANGWAY! - - VENTURE AND ADVENTURE

By KATHERYN OFFILL

"LET'S WRITE about the good kids who are the nonconformists. Let's write a musical play about the bright brats."

Maybe that idea isn't the most dramatic beginning for a musical play about teenagers, but out of that attitude came the success of the production, *Gangway!* *Gangway!* isn't a story of an adult's conception of teenagers, but a story of real youngsters with their obstinate feelings and immature emotions. They speak their own thoughts in their own language, and the adults can only stand on the sidelines trying to guide their actions. As is most often the case, the process of growth toward maturity is painful — and its fulfillment rewarding.

On November 4, 1959, Lynwood High School (Lynwood, California) presented the premiere performance of a musical play written expressly for the high school theater. *Gangway!* was a success far beyond the anticipations of authors Marc D. Ross and Katheryn Offill, who wrote the book, and Marylou Peterson, who wrote the music. The students packed the auditorium along with the adults. The P.T.A. wrote its approval to the Lynwood Superintendent of Schools (who himself expressed written congratulations to the school principal and the school drama director). "Good taste," they said. "Real kids, wonderful music, top-notch theater." No doubt about it, *Gangway!* was the perfect answer to the need for outstanding high school entertainment.



Johnny Prince (Dennis Etchison) and Jinx Thompson (Jean Niethamer) practice their feuding while diminutive author Katheryn Offill and pretty composer Marylou Peterson direct their attention to other matters.

Every year the Junior class at Lynwood High School presents the Junior Jamboree, which is usually a play interspersed with variety acts. The Junior Jamboree has a two-fold purpose: to act as a showcase for the talents of the Junior class and to provide finances for the Junior-Senior Prom. As drama director, my greatest problem has always been to find suitable material. In quest of such material, I consulted with Marc Ross, Chairman of Speech at Long Beach Polytechnic High School. (The previous year I had produced a play of his, *Swimming in Hot Water*, with very successful results.) Mr. Ross suggested that the two of us form a team

to write a musical play about adolescents. "Kids playing old men look like kids playing old men," he said. "Let's write the play for the capabilities of our high school actors." Over countless cups of black coffee, we blocked out our plot, scene by scene, designating where we desired to introduce music and dance numbers. (When, in the course of this work, either of us came up with a good line, we'd put it down for use in the dialogue later on. Fortunately, our thinking is so similar that it's impossible to tell who wrote what.) The characters were not hard for us to create; most of them we had known during the course of our teaching careers. One of us would say, "I've got a boy in my second period class . . ." and we had another role. However, in casting a play with music, we reminded ourselves that many schools would have limited talent to choose from, so the lyrics were written as musical dialogue so that, if necessary (as it was in our production) a student could talk through a singing role without detracting from the quality of the part. Another aim was to make the music an integral part of the play. We were fortunate in having an exceptionally fine musical talent at Lynwood High School in the person of Marylou Peterson. She joined in our enthusiasm and agreed to become the third member of our team.

The setting of *Gangway!* had to be simple so that it could easily be adapted for use in any school which might lack adequate stage facilities. Therefore we

(Continued on Page 29)



The curtain comes down as the reformed nonconformists sing, "We've got a show! GANGWAY!"



# The "Barnum" of the Movies: Cecil B. DeMille

By DELWIN B. DUSENBURY

SOME assumed that the "B" in Cecil B. DeMille's name stood for "Barnum" instead of the ancestral name of "Blount," for without a doubt, he will be long-remembered for the colorful spectacle, the historic pageantry, and the dynamic vitality he brought to the motion picture screen. In 1959, when he died at the age of 77, one writer referred to him as "movie titan and founder of Hollywood." Bosley Crowther, film critic of the New York TIMES, in his tribute to him wrote:

There is probably no one in motion picture history who has been more honored and glorified than he. . . . He was a maker of big pictures—of mammoth, spectacular films that amazed and impressed and often humbled millions of people all over the world.

He represented the consummate "showman" as he personally introduced his last picture, *The Ten Commandments*, from the screen. With the possible exception of the whimsical British director, Alfred Hitchcock, no director would have had the temerity to appear before the screen audience in such a manner. But DeMille, dignified, proud, bald, except for a fringe of white hair, his pervasive, somewhat raspy, voice, with its incisive enunciation not dulled by the years, represented "one of the most compulsive and uninhibited showmen in Hollywood." Today, *The Ten Commandments*, with an income of \$32,000,000, is the first picture to threaten the box-office success of *Gone with the Wind* with a financial return of \$33,500,000. DeMille, with his understanding of the American public and his pioneering achievements was not only the

most successful of all his distinguished colleagues in the film industry, but also serves as a representative example of the developing role of the director in motion pictures.

On a December day in 1913, DeMille, Oscar Apfel, a young director who began with Edison in 1911, the actor, Dustin Farnum, and a cameraman stepped off the train in Los Angeles, and eventually journeyed out to the sleepy village of Hollywood, then some ten miles north of the center of the city. They were the first contingent of the new Jesse L. Lasky Features Play Company organized by Lasky (1881-1958), a former vaudeville performer, booking agent, and producer. The nattily-dressed and charming Lasky had met DeMille as a result of needing someone to write the books for his vaudeville revues. The DeMille name was well-known in theatrical circles through the plays of the father of the family, Henry C. DeMille (1850-1903), and the eldest son William (1878-1954), as well as the acting of the young Cecil (1881-1959). After her husband's death Mrs. DeMille became a literary agent, and the enterprising Lasky had come to her to engage a writer. Since William was working on a new play, she recommended her younger son Cecil, who was "at liberty."

The association of Lasky and DeMille was a happy one until the restless DeMille indicated he was heading for Mexico and the revolution there. Although Lasky, as a younger man, had gone to Alaska during the "gold rush" days, he was not interested in another adventurous undertaking. Furthermore,



In 1917 Mary Pickford (pictured here in her success, *Pollyanna*, 1920) was assigned to appear in two films under DeMille's direction. Although both respected each other's abilities, the association was one of the few failures in the rising careers of both.

he was being persuaded by his dynamic brother-in-law, Samuel Goldfish (he later changed his name to "Goldwyn"), to enter the new field of feature-length motion pictures. Zukor had not yet imported *Queen Elizabeth*, and "two-reelers" dominated the flickering screen. With DeMille's energies diverted to the new idea, a company was formed with Lasky as president, Goldfish as salesman, and DeMille as director-general. Probably DeMille was the first man with a recognized theater background to turn to motion pictures. With his father's love for the Bible and American history plus Belasco's training, DeMille, aged 32, was well-prepared to pioneer in this new realm of mass entertainment.

The company selected a successful Broadway play, *The Squaw Man* (1905), in which the popular stage actor, Dustin Farnum, had wanted to appear. The play's Western setting suggested, for the sake of economy, filming it "on location" in the West. Previously most of the two-reel "Westerns" had been filmed in New Jersey or along the Palisades although in 1908 "Broncho Billy" Anderson had taken a company to Niles, California, to film his pioneering "Westerns."

DeMille's Hollywood "studio" was really an L-shaped barn in which the horse stalls served conveniently as dressing rooms and offices. *The Squaw Man* (1914), co-directed by DeMille and Apfel, was finally completed. Each scene was filmed twice not only because of the inflammable nature of the negative but also as insurance against sabotage by rival competitors including the "Trust" (the Motion Picture Patents Company). When the film was previewed for the cast and staff, the negative jumped erratically through the projector blurring the scenes. Facing financial disaster, DeMille personally took the second copy of the film to Sigmund Lubin, Philadelphia film pioneer since 1897, who al-

(Continued on Page 28)



A typical "on location" scene of a director in action. During DeMille's reign as leading director of Hollywood, some "stars" directed their own pictures as demonstrated here by the popular comedian, Charlie Chaplin, filming *The Gold Rush* (1925). Note the cameras with hand-crankers used during the period.



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... "I do want to say first of all that the play DID go over and it was very popular with the teen-agers who are now just very critical of plays. 'FAIR EXCHANGE' was really accepted by them. They liked it because it was within their scope for acting but it wasn't JUST a teen-age comedy which they think too boring for words. It had the element of intrigue in it. Our audience had fun and so did we" . . . Olema Mote, Director, Central High School, Evansville, Ind.

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# ORIGINAL ORATORY

By PAUL A. CARMACK

**G**REAT orators are scarcer than great poets. The requirements for the great orations assumed that a number of necessary factors must all coincide at peak level. The classical concept of oratory reserved the title of "oratory" for those great addresses which were delivered to warn a nation's people of impending danger to national existence. When Demosthenes repeatedly warned the Athenians of the possible invasion by King Phillip II of Macedon, he was the true orator. His persuasive warnings were called the Phillipics. The word came to be used as the name for this type of oratory which alerts hearers to take defensive action.

Later Cicero called oratory the art of speaking well. He said oratory was a great art composed of five great arts. In order to qualify as an oration the speech had to have (1) the finest of content, (2) arrangement in the best organized form, (3) language couched in the finest literary use, (4) delivery of the finest oral variety, and (5) fluency of memory.

It is difficult to attain great skill in any one of the five "arts," and it is a rare individual who can master all of them. In addition to this five part supremacy, the address must be delivered (1) upon a great occasion in history, (2) before an appreciative and important audience, (3) by a great leader held in great esteem, and (4) centered about a crucial subject matter. It is even possible that the greatness of the speech may not be grasped at the time, but that history is kind to the speaking event in retrospect.

Further requisites for great persuasive speaking would require (1) that the speaker is seeking the truth, (2) that he influenced history with clearly noticeable results, (3) that the speech and the speaker lived up to a high ethical standard, and (4) that artistic criteria be achieved.

John Quincy Adams called oratory the "art of speaking well." He first held the Boylston Chair of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard University (1806-1809). He was called "Old Man Eloquent" for his speaking and his parliamentary ability in Congress.

Many great American orators have helped make history, and some orations have become historical. Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* and Webster's *Reply to Hayne* are examples of oratory which also have achieved literary acceptability. We know too that there has been much abuse of good speaking by self-seeking speakers of doubtful ethics. This misuse has been common enough that we often identify oratory and rhetoric with its worst abuses. However, the high regard for the "good man skilled in speaking" has not been diminished.

In the study of Plato's theories of rhetoric the use of persuasive speech is compared to the use of a knife. In the hands of a skilled surgeon, the knife could be used in a life saving operation;

in the hands of a murderer a human life could be taken. But we do not blame nor praise the knife; we put responsibility on the motives and skill of the user. Thus it should be with oratory. The tool of oratory is much like education itself. Each may be used for good or evil. Under a dictatorship we see the dictator using the microphone for demagoguery. He similarly perverts education to his own purposes.

The only antidote for either evil is better speaking and better education for freedom. Aristotle warns that he who has truth and justice on his side and still loses is to be doubly shamed. Many western world religions feel a command to speak up for truth throughout the entire world. The respectability of fine speaking by esteemed leaders with ethical motives is the real hope of reform. Persuasive speech based on unselfish motives not only is held in high regard, but is a necessity. There is no proposal that effective speaking be abandoned because it has been poorly done by many. Instead, the use of good public address must be increased in amount and especially in quality.

A number of surveys have established the strong factor for leadership which effective speaking holds. Many Americans find that they must assume positions of leadership in their social and community groups. Many adults find that they need to "return to classwork" and take an adult education course in speech. It would be better for the next generation to learn effective speaking while they are in school. For those who would like to use "above average" ability in public speech, an attempt to write, practice, and deliver a good academic oration is strongly recommended.

The advantages of the preparation and delivery of the original oration over the typical speech effort are several, but this exercise is meant as a strong supplement to extemporaneous speech training. In the preparation of a good oration the student might expect to use most of the school year in the total process. Much effort in selection of content materials is necessary. Then after careful choice of the topic, the overall plan of organization must be carefully thought out. Next comes the business of careful writing and re-writing to improve language usage. The speech must be memorized

thoroughly and presented before a critic in order that delivery may be polished.

In all of this the speaker must avoid the loss of spontaneity which is needed for effective audience rapport. In order not to "go stale" from long practice, it would be good training to prepare the oration and deliver it before a critic early in the school year. After a favorable degree of proficiency is attained, drop the work completely until mid-December. Then rewrite the speech and if necessary rewrite it again. In January the student orator should resume the serious training for the delivering of the oration. He should work early with a good oratory critic to avoid starting with serious mistakes which must then be unlearned. Deliver the speech with peak effort at proficiency. Do not do a lackadaisical practice. Since the strong season for scholastic effort in oratory is usually the months of February and March, the whole effort should round into peak efficiency at this time. This is a "large order," but success in speaking is a great effort long continued. Many American audiences have suffered from "slip-shod" and poorly prepared speakers. This has usually rebounded to the discredit of speech education when only the lack of it should be deplored.

Not all good public speaking is oratorical. While a speech may be strongly persuasive, it could not be called an oration. Many strong oral pleas may be heard in the legislature or the court room. Many intellectual appeals and highly informative lectures are done exceptionally well, but the oration combined many of their good features with an appeal to our finer emotions. These emotions are the high regard for and love of country, toleration for others, altruistic motives, and even enlightened self-interest. The proof of the main issue is supported by powerful appeals to man's better emotions. The plea calls for voluntary belief and action by listeners since the cause is just and is urgently in need of attention. The speaker does not resort to threats of force to gain acceptance but approaches the finer motives in the hearers. The word "persuasion" is derived from the Latin phrase which translates in our language as "by sweetness" or "by gentleness." In Rome in the first century the great teacher of promising young Roman boys was the rhetorician Quintilian. He could be called "the first state superintendent of public instruction." His students were given a complete education whose chief purpose was to train them to speak exceedingly well in the Senate, the Forum, and in public assemblies. As one of the greatest of all educators, Quintilian felt that "Eloquence is the greatest gift of Providence to man."

We know that the student orator is not yet accepted as a public leader, so his speaking must be academic or as done in a supposed situation. For practical purposes of scholastic speaking, he



can choose to do a problem-solving speech or he may decide to do a eulogy of a great person or a cause. However, many speech judges do not regard a speech of praise as a strong kind of oratory and may give less credit to such a topic than that which they attach to a problem-solving speech.

#### THE PROBLEM - SOLVING ORATION

Because of something in his own experience, the student may feel deeply about an "impending danger" to his nation, his state, or his group. Because of deep personal conviction many student orators from minority groups have had singular success. However, students should not become "maudlin" by doing a "tear jerking" plea about an overplay of the sympathy request. Most all of us have had our bad times and could build a case for commiseration. Remember that most all of your listeners have had difficult days. You might even ask "who hasn't had troubles?" It is better to approach the listener with a reasonable plea which can be defended with dignity and one which does not leave the speaker "as an object of pity."

If the speaker's life has seemed uneventful to him, he must search for a means of persuasion by wide reaching of current problems and then their historical backgrounds. We have had no periods in American history when we had no pressing problems. The speaker who feels no "personal responsibility" at all will not wish to prepare an oration. But once his problem topic is chosen, he must research all available sources by use of library facilities, interviews, and letters. He is about to prepare a persuasive speech of literary quality to induce audience response favorable to belief and action. His best thinking should achieve an oral product which uses imaginative language with such originality as to win admiration and thereby aid its acceptance plea. It is not a time for personal exhibitionism by over ornateness. What the speaker does and says must seem believable and sincere. The quality of naturalness must be maintained. He must not try to imitate another speaker, however successful, if his own abilities do not permit it. The written style is not the oral style, and a memorized "essay" is likely to be short of persuasiveness and spontaneity. A topic which is within the student's ability and one which can be handled effectively in the time limits is the topic to select.

**Arrangement of the Materials.** The format of the speech follows the requirements for a good persuasive presentation with the intent of doing the job at peak performance. Since we have decided that the orator's purpose is persuasion, we must build a "vehicle" toward arriving at that high goal. In the case of most good topics, we find our audience already on one side. They already believe you and your views. They already favor

#### EVALUATOR'S INDIVIDUAL RATING SHEET

(Problem - Solving Oratory)

Name or No. of Orator

Title or Oration

•• Check +, or - where it applies

- I. Was the subject selected one about which the orator deeply feels the necessity of inspiring belief in his hearers?
  - A. Did the orator effectively establish an urgent need of a solution for this problem? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Was the problem a thing of deep significance to this speaker? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Was the problem chosen deserving of the speaker's efforts? \_\_\_\_\_
- II. Has the speaker's research into this problem been genuine and thorough?
  - A. Did the speaker make use of valid evidence? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Did he avoid overemphasis of biased materials? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Did the speaker display a considerable knowledge concerning his topic? \_\_\_\_\_
- III. Was the organization of the oration best designed to achieve the speaker's purpose?
  - A. Was the subject or problem presented clearly? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Did the organization effectively lead to the audience's strongest response? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Did the conclusion clinch the belief desired by the speaker? \_\_\_\_\_
- IV. Was the speaker's style of expression appropriate for the occasion?
  - A. Was the style simple and direct? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Was the use of vocabulary original and interesting? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Did the casting of the language add dignity and distinction? \_\_\_\_\_
- V. Did the delivery of the oration convey the deep conviction of one who desires acceptance of his beliefs?
  - A. Did the voice please, inspire, and convey the mood and thought? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Was the bodily action spontaneous and communicative? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Was there a direct relationship of speaker and audience? \_\_\_\_\_

#### EULOGY ORATION

- I. Was the topic selected one about which the orator deeply feels the value of extolling the virtues of the person, group or cause?
  - A. Did the orator effectively establish an admiration of the virtues? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Was the object of the eulogy deserving of the praise? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Was the topic appropriate for a tribute by this speaker? \_\_\_\_\_
- II. Has the speaker's research into this problem been genuine and thorough?
  - A. Has the speaker made use of direct information? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Did the speaker avoid exaggeration? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Did the speaker display a considerable knowledge of his topic? \_\_\_\_\_
- III. Was the organization of the oration designed to achieve the speaker's purpose?
  - A. Was the arrangement of virtues and attainments most likely to arouse interest? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Did the organization most effectively lead to the audience's concurrence? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Did the conclusion establish the praiseworthiness of the person, group or cause? \_\_\_\_\_
- IV. Was the speaker's style of expression appropriate for the occasion?
  - A. Was the style simple and direct? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Was the use of vocabulary original and interesting? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Did the casting of the language add dignity and distinction? \_\_\_\_\_
- V. Did the delivery of the oration convey a deep conviction of the merits and accomplishments of the subject?
  - A. Did the voice please, inspire, and convey the mood and thought? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Was the bodily action spontaneous and communicative? \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Was there a direct relationship of speaker and audience? \_\_\_\_\_

- The Speech Director has certified that the student is the original author of the oration.
- Check for above average, 0 for average, - needs improvement.

Judge

"world peace," "justice for all," "help for the unfortunate," "self determination for all people," and other such worthy causes. So you must bring to bear such supporting evidence and proofs as to reawaken the listener to his duties, arouse him to act now, not later, revive his fading interest, refresh his beliefs in fair play, and stimulate him to do what he already has believed proper. The successful orator sends the listener out to do what he believes to be the American thing to do in this case. Information is necessary, but it is not enough here. The use of creative language delivered persuasively for action response is not a short term preparation effort delivered

casually. You aim less to convince than to try to move listeners to action. For this reason there is less need for a lengthy plan for a solution of the problem, such as found in the affirmative debate speech. But a general and brief suggestion of a course of action to accomplish the purpose for your plea may aid in the persuasion objective.

The speech can well follow the general plan or outline of the good extempore public speech but with less emphasis on the information giving purpose in favor of an all-out drive for audience action to work for the solution of the problem to be solved. It is good to carry on more

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# THEATER



FOR

CHILDREN



FRIEDA E. REED

## CHOOSING THE CHILDREN'S PLAY

HAVING decided to produce the Children's Play with high school students, the director is faced with the very first important consideration: choice of play. Before we begin the real discussion of choice of play for Children's Theater, it is important that we are thinking together about what we mean by "children" in connection with this subject. It should be clear at the outset that this writer does not intend to attempt to probe abstrusely into the nebulous borderlines and terminologies that this word "children" may imply. That is the area for the psychologists, and may they have fun! James Thurber says, and not facetiously, I think, that many so-called children are more astute in their judgments than many so-called adults. The implication is clear in this statement about the folly of writing down to children. Two of the experts in the field of Children's Theater, Charlotte Chorpenning and Miss Winifred Ward, seem at variance in their advice about the age level of audiences for children's plays. Miss Ward would exclude children of pre-school age from Children's Theater, believing at that age some other kind of entertainment would be more valuable for them. Then, in her ideal theater, she would plan productions for one group (first grade through fourth), place fifth and sixth grades in another audience, and junior high school students in a third, of course, with a different type of play for each group. And, she supports her argument with much sound reasoning. On the other hand, Charlotte Chorpenning, in her book, *Twenty-One Years with Children's Theater*, says, in giving advice to writers for Children's Theater, "Write for a diversified audience: diverse in chronological age, inheritance, environment, stage of maturity, individual experience, etc."

At Upper Darby in our experience with children's plays by high school students, we have been inclined to make a kind of compromise between these two theories about choice of play. If our school calendar allowed a series of children's plays in one year, we would probably follow Miss Ward's advice in limited audience according to chronological age. However, we are able to produce only one children's play (in three performances, playing to about 2400 children). In our publicity and ticket sales for our children's plays, we have placed the emphasis on the group from first grade through fourth grade, but we have



The Wizard of Oz, Troupe 1351, Berkeley, Calif., High School, Florence Schwimley, Sponsor

always had a generous sprinkling of pre-school children and young people above fourth grade. Here again I say that while this may not be an ideal situation, we have never found that those audience members for whom the play was not ideally suited, according to the rules, were a disturbing element. Furthermore, we know that many youngsters who started to come to our plays before they started to school have continued to come each year, maintaining their interest so that when they entered senior high school, they joined our group as producers of the type of plays upon which they had grown up.

Regardless of the specific age group for which we choose our plays (and for the purposes of this discussion, we shall be considering plays for the early elementary grades), the first consideration in choice of play must be *quality*. Unless this element governs the choice of play, we are failing our duty to the child audience, doing much more harm than good to the children, and we are wasting the time of our producers (who, in our case, are also students). This one word *quality* may be more difficult to define than to recognize, but let us examine a few evidences of *quality*. First, I believe that it is wasteful—ever—at any level to produce a play that doesn't meet at least the minimum qualifications of good literature. Here we come to another difficult-to-define term, but I believe that we can't go far wrong if we think of literature as the artistic record of man's best thinking and feeling, with breadth and depth, with certain elements of permanence and universality, in language that communicates directly to the reader and incites his imagination. . . . Yes, I believe that this much is basic. Every child has a right to the best there is. But, our problem is not so easily solved. In choosing a play we should expect this basic literary value, but the play is not to be merely read;

it is to be transferred to the audience in terms of speech, pantomime, and pictorial effect. Here enters an additional set of requirements of the good children's play.

Perhaps another way to get at this matter of *quality* is to consider the purposes of Children's Theater. In a negative fashion we know that those purposes cannot be—dare not be—to exploit the child audience to make money or gain publicity for producers or publishers or playwrights or actors or anyone else. Dr. Kenneth L. Graham has analyzed and presented the purposes of children's plays more succinctly and validly than I have seen in the work of anyone else. I should like to quote these purposes, as they were published in *Plays for Children*, the Children's Theater Press, 1953.

He says:

*First:* "Children's plays should, by presenting opportunities for children to identify themselves with personalities in situations they can understand, provide pleasant and worthwhile entertainment."

*Second:* "Children's plays should, by providing a wide range of imaginative vicarious experience, satisfy the psychological need of children."

*Third:* "Children's plays should not obviously instruct, but should, by presenting experiences wherein children can identify themselves with characters in situations which make concrete an estimation of some vital phase (or phases of life) provide opportunity for the child to learn sympathetic understanding of people, and the reasons for the commonly accepted ideals characteristic of American life."

*Fourth:* "Children's plays should, by meeting the foregoing purposes, and conforming to the fundamental accepted standards of dramatic technique, train the present generation so that they will become intelligent, critical adult audiences of the future."

Let us pause for just a moment to re-





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stress several of these excellently stated points. In the matter of *entertainment* as a purpose, you will recall that Dr. Graham stresses *worthwhile* entertainment — entertainment in the sense of an experience of permanent value — in contrast with the kind of dubious momentary amusement that is too often flung at children to publicize and popularize anything from juicy juleps to bubblier gum. Let us notice that this worthwhile entertainment is to come through opportunities for children to identify themselves with personalities in situations they can comprehend. Here, there needs to be real care both in the selection and the direction of the play to see that there is at least one character presented with whom it would be wholesome for the child to identify himself. For, if the play catches his attention, identify he will, and it is important that the object of identification be worthwhile.

Another emphasis is probably in order in connection with the matter of warning against *obvious instruction*. Someone has said that children love to learn but hate to be taught. We all know the brand of saccharine didactic literature that seventh-rate authors and indiscriminate publishers have tried to force down the throats of adults, and how soon those writings have gone to their well-deserved oblivion. We all want to learn, but we want to learn obliquely, and we feel wonderful when we have been "clever" enough to grasp the point...

We have emphasized that fundamental element in play selection that we have called *quality*. As an approach to the analysis of *quality*, we have cited some valid purposes of Children's Theater. Now, what are some of the very specific characteristics of a well-constructed children's play for which we need to look?

Probably, first, we should look for a good story line, one that moves with reasonable rapidity, through minor crises to a climax and then closes quickly. There needs to be a problem, and it needs to be solved satisfactorily (again to cite Charlotte Chorpenning) in keeping with "life's values." There needs to be something happening much of the time, but happening to a point for the logical development of the story. And there needs to be the element of suspense. In connection with judging a good story line, one needs to beware of the play that is merely an agglomeration of concocted incidents, just for the sake of excitement. There needs to be abundant opportunity, both indicated and implicit in the lines — for action — good strong pantomime. Pantomimic scenes are often the most appealing in the play.

The characters, at least the major characters, and certainly the one with whom the child is expected to identify himself, should be believable — at least two-dimensional; he should not be merely a cartoon-like stereotype — nor an allegorical figment. For the younger children, animal characters are always appealing.

Another consideration should certainly be the dialogue of the play. In addition to promoting the development of the plot, it should develop characterization. It should be clean-cut, avoid speech for its own sake, and help to establish the mood of the play — serious, playful, fantastic, whimsical.

Children love the familiar, hence the perennial appeal of the dramatized fairy tales and children's classic; and, by the same token, they revel in judicious repetition, both in line and situation. The adult reading children's plays for selection needs to be alert to this appeal to children; often repetition, which to the adult reader is tiresome, to the child audience is most effective. As in so many phases of writing for children, Charlotte Chorpenning was most adept in the use of this technique.

Still another consideration in choice of a children's play is the very mechanical one of length. From our work in this area, we are convinced that no children's play should be longer than one and one-half hours from opening to closing curtain, this including all intermissions.

One consideration in choice of a children's play which often arises I am treating in a rather cavalier manner; that is, the matter of budget. We believe that beyond the cost of royalty for a good play (and here we would never sacrifice) there are very few good chil-

(Continued on Page 26)





**Pygmalion**, Troupe 1895, Lindenhurst, N.Y., High School, James F. Oliver, Sponsor

### PYGMALION

Lindenhurst, N.Y., Sr. High School

**S**HAW'S *Pygmalion* is one of the difficult shows to produce on the high school level; however, it offers rich returns in dramatic experience for the troupe that accepts the challenge. Troupe 1895 recently completed giving three performances of this beautiful romance. The Cinderella-like theme captures the imagination of both the actor and the audience.

The plot concerns the challenge of a speech teacher, Prof. Higgins, to make a Duchess out of a cockney flower girl, Eliza Doolittle. Higgins succeeds in improving Eliza's speech and she truly becomes, before our eyes, a "lady" of rare charm and beauty. However, he fails in their relationship as two human beings. The play centers on this blindness of Higgins towards the sensitive feelings of Eliza.

Casting is a hard job, but if the talent is available, it is a rewarding production to produce. We only stressed dialect for Eliza and Alfred Doolittle and several of the minor characters in the street scene of act one. All other characters spoke American English, stressing a refined pronunciation.

We handled the set changes by using a basic street-scene flat for act one that could be flown. Portable pillars were used to add depth to the scene depicting the church. A basic set was then used for the remaining acts. We set in French doors that could be transformed from doors to windows to suggest a different room, along with specific changes in furniture to alter the atmosphere.

Costumes were not difficult to gather. We found many gowns at the Salvation Army that were easily alterable to suggest the dress of 1912 London.

Our high school dance band played music from *My Fair Lady* between acts. We found the association of this music to the actual acting out of the play beneficial for understanding the plot. It helped the audience catch the mood of the drama.

JAMES OLIVER

Sponsor, Troupe 1895

### THE THREAD THAT RUNS SO TRUE

Greencastle, Ind., High School

**T**he *Thread That Runs So True* was chosen as the first semester production by troupe 1098, because we liked the plot, and because our general dramatic theme this year is "The Twenties." We had already decided on our other production this year, a musical, *The Boy Friend*, taking place in the Riviera. *The Thread That Runs So True* was an excellent contrast in location and dramatic form to *The Boy Friend*. Director Gertrude Slack and Technical Director John Franklin were hesitant about the large size of the cast,

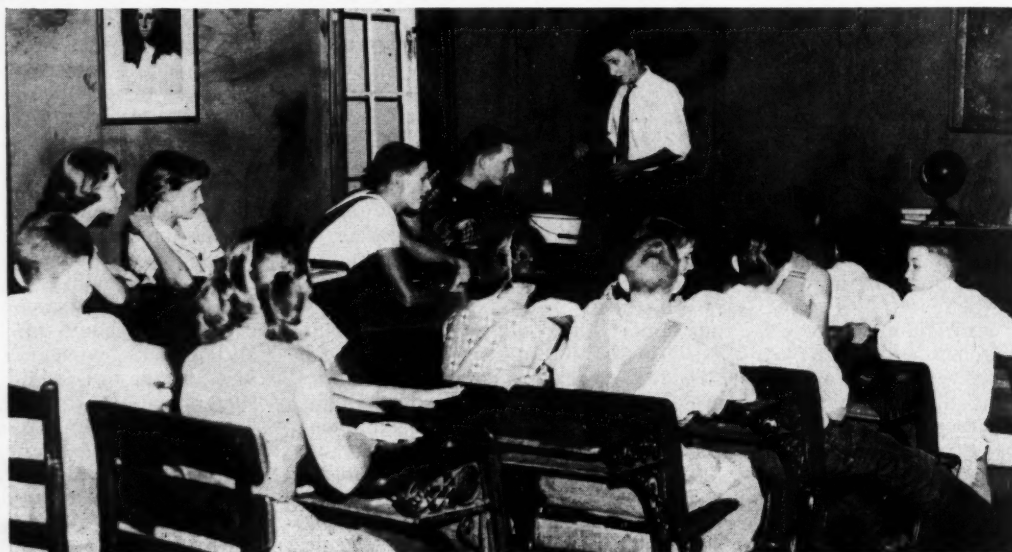


twenty-eight speaking parts in all, but it proved to be an asset. The enthusiasm spread like quicksilver through the cast.

This is a fascinating autobiography of a great man. Jesse Stuart, age eighteen, arrives at a schoolhouse in Kentucky. Determined to get a school started in the little country town, Jesse rings the welcoming bell. Many pupils come the first day, including Guy Hawkins and Ova Slayers. Both boys are over sixteen, still in the first grade, and offended by the fact that someone should have the audacity to suggest schooling.

Hardships, courage, victories, romance, humor — all are unfolded as the production continues. Jesse finally wins over Guy and Ova, and school continues successfully. As a climax, Lonesome Valley Rural School, Jesse's school, challenges Landsborough High, a big city school, to an academic contest. Of course Lonesome Valley runs off with the honors.

Besides being a challenge to the actors, especially to Jesse, who must be played by a capable person, and to the little nine- or ten-year-old girls, the stage setting was a real undertaking. Old, immovable desks were sought for and finally found in the attic of an old school building. A pot-bellied stove, lanterns, a water cooler typical of the time, all were assembled and created into an exceptionally realistic set. The acts were easy to costume, as they were school scenes and mostly took place during the winter.



**The Thread That Runs So True**, Troupe 1098, Greencastle, Ind., High School, Gertrude Slack, Sponsor; set designed by John Franklin

**DINO**  
**PYGMALION**  
**THE RED HOUSE MYSTERY**  
**THE THREAD THAT RUNS SO TRUE**

*The Thread That Runs So True* was an enjoyable experience for all involved — directors, cast, stage crews, and audience.

CAROL RECTOR  
Scribe, Troupe 1098

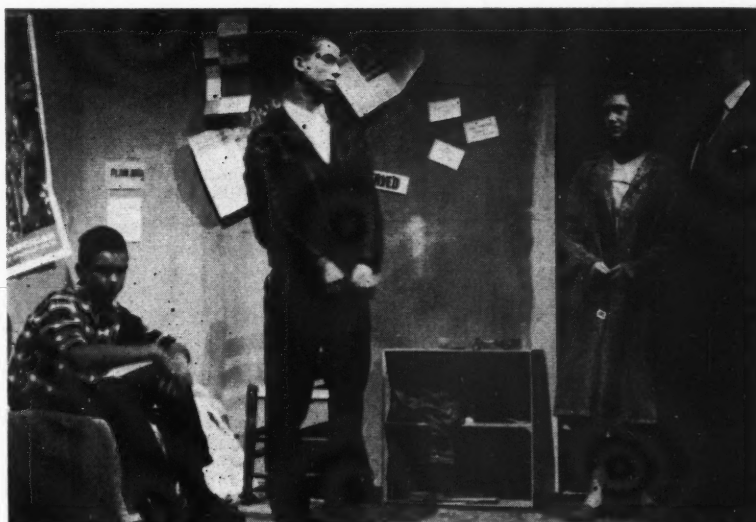
**THE RED HOUSE MYSTERY**

Stonewall Jackson H.S., Charleston, W. Va.

**M**ANY things in high school dramatics prove to be quite a problem. For instance, I have many questions to answer before I can decide on a play. Just what type of play should I choose for this class? What will my production problems be? How many people will I have to work with? What results may I expect from this play? These were only a few of the questions which were answered by *The Red House Mystery*.

The type of play, a mystery, appeals to an alert audience of high school students. This play in particular catches the interest of the audience within the first few minutes of the play and holds the student spellbound until the curtain falls on Act III. The stage may be one simple setting of an English drawing-room. The play lends itself to beauty from the title. I found red draperies, a beautiful sterling tea service, a large collection of books, English scenes in pictures, and a few well chosen pieces of furniture brought a warm response of approval from the audience when the curtain opened for Act I. The lighting is simple but most effective from sunlight in the afternoon to a deep blue for the murder scene. An amateur may be trained for lighting with a minimum of rehearsals.

As the play opens each character has a good reason for wanting to kill the crafty cheat Mark Ablett. The lovely



Dino, Troupe 358, Medford, Oregon, High School, A. Lenore Zapell, Sponsor

Angela Norberry offers quite a pursuit for Mark and Mathew Cayley. The mystery is not solved until the last few seconds of the play.

*The Red House Mystery* was one of the most richly rewarding plays I have given at Stonewall. It had an unusual appeal for both our adult and student audience. Many tears were shed at the cast party after the play. There had been hours of work, but each member of the cast knew in his own mind that he had given an outstanding performance. What more could a director ask?

JEAN D. BOURNE  
Director, Troupe 121

**DINO**

Medford, Ore., Sr. High School

**O**UR production of the stage adaptation of Reginald Rose's *Dino* was gratifying in many ways. First of all, it was the first presentation by the brand new troupe 358. Its financial and artistic success was a good beginning. Secondly, most of our young people were comparatively inexperienced, but they were so eager to give convincing characterizations and so willing to work

that their progress, from first reading to dress rehearsal, was remarkable.

The plot of *Dino* is concerned with efforts of several warm-hearted people to help a seventeen-year-old boy find a secure emotional position for himself. He has returned to his slum home after four years in reform school and finds it difficult to realize that Mr. Sheridan, the psychotherapist, and young Shirley Wallace are interested in him as a worthy human being. Through their interest and sincere affection, he learns to assess his own value. He begins to give his affection to others instead of being constantly defensive.

Part of our success was a result of the fluidity of action which we were able to achieve by our method of staging. There was no necessity to break the action for changes of scene within each act because we had three permanent acting areas, each of which could be lit independently. The stage proper contained the lobby and Mr. Sheridan's office. To help achieve the distinctness of this room, we placed it on a platform 8' x 8' x 1', with one side wall and an upstage wall. In this upstage wall we placed a sliding door which was left open for all scenes that took place outside of Mr. Sheridan's office. To add interest to the lobby, we made the main entrance a revolving door, and hung a rather "beat" looking chandelier, made of an old wagon wheel, which was wired for lights.

*Dino's* room was formed by building a platform in front of and slightly right of the stage. This was the same height as the stage and measured 6' x 9'. Blacking out the rest of the acting area and spotting this "room" for the scenes that played there, was especially effective.

LENORE ZAPELL  
Sponsor, Troupe 358

**PUBLISHERS**

*Dino*, *The Red House Mystery*, *The Thread That Runs So True*, Dramatic Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois.  
*Pygmalion*, Samuel French, New York City.



*The Red House Mystery*, Troupe 121, Stonewall Jackson High School, Charleston, W. Va., Ralph Currey, Sponsor



# Thespian Chatter

## UNION, MAINE

### Troupe 1508

Troupe 1508 had its most successful year to date in 1959-60. *Meet Me in St. Louis* was the first production of the fall. This three-act comedy was received warmly by the audience. It was followed by the annual one-act play contest in December with each class in high school presenting a play. The seniors are proud to say they won with *Rise and Shine*.

An eager cast began work in March for our school's first entry in the State Sectional One-Act Play Contest. We were an excited group when it was announced that *The Best There Is* placed first. We lost at the State Regional, but won again in the Medomak Valley League Contest over five other schools.

To climax our memorable year the annual initiation of new members and installation of officers for next year was held. Awards were given out, and a public rehearsal was staged so that parents could see what goes into a production. The entire troupe anticipates the coming year to be as exciting and profitable as the one we have just enjoyed. — *Sandra Calderwood, Corresponding Sec'y*

## WAYNE, MICHIGAN

### Troupe 670

Wayne Memorial High School's Troupe 670 had a very active year. We initiated twenty new members; and after the first semester initiation, we held an open house for relatives and friends of our troupe members. Members of the troupe participated in two three-act plays, *Dino* and *Ah! Wilderness*; they produced the Children's Theater play, *Bad Children*, which played seven performances to approximately 4,000 children from the second to sixth grades inclusive. The proceeds of these productions are used to finance the sending of delegates to the National Conference. In May we produced Tennessee Williams' play, *Moony's Kid Don't Cry* for the State One-Act Play Festival at Wayne State University in Detroit. Then came the highlight of our season when we brought this same play to Indiana University and presented it at the Eighth National Thespian Conference. Plans are already under way for the production of *The Taming of the Shrew* to be given next season. This will be our first venture into the world of Shakespeare. Besides these activities, our troupe worked with the

Dramatics Club in its production of "An Evening of One-Act Plays." Sixteen of our members attended the National Conference at Indiana University, and we are eagerly looking forward to the next conference in 1962. — *Joyce Loga, Secretary*

## PITTSBURGH, PA.

### Troupe 1711

Though we were a little uncertain, we decided to take a chance and try our luck with a very successful Broadway play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Troupe 1711 here in Wilkesburg worked night and day for months. Many evenings were spent in the public library where students read all about the ordeal of the Frank family while they were in "hiding." Fortunately our efforts proved to be successful ones, and this spring we took several scenes of the production to the Western Pennsylvania Thespian Conference. We were fortunate enough to come home with awards for the best actress in W. Pennsylvania and the best actor. It was an all-school play which proved to be a challenge not only to the cast but to all the committees which participated as well. It was educational.

The theme for our meetings this year was "Drama Round the World." We observed drama in Burma, Hawaii, and Greece. For St. Patrick's day we observed drama in Ireland, and our Oriental garden party was a huge success. We had reports on drama in these various countries which proved to be fun for all concerned. We ended the year with an academy awards presentation taking place in India. — *Bonnie Pratt, Secretary*

## SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

### Troupe 628

"Confusion!" hissed the villain as he left the Nutter family household forever. So ended *The Little Brown Jug*, a melodrama which our advisor had found in the Oregon State Library. This "museum piece" had the audience rolling in the aisles at the well-aged 1876 corn. The only trouble was that we kept wanting to over-act in everything else we did all year.

*Pinocchio* packed the Post Theater for five performances with excited children who at times forgot to eat their popcorn as they watched Pinocchio become a donkey, wander in the stomach of the whale, and escape from

## BROADWAY LINE-UP

ADVISE AND CONSENT (Cort), drama, Ed Begley, Richard Kiley, Chester Morris.

BECKET (Royale), drama, Laurence Olivier, Anthony Quinn.

BEST MAN (Morosco), comedy-drama, Melvyn Douglas, Lee Tracy.

BYE, BYE, BIRDIE (Shubert), musical comedy, Chita Rivera, Dick Van Dyke.

CAMELOT (Majestic), musical comedy, Richard Burton, Julie Andrews.

DO RE MI (St. James), musical comedy, Phil Silvers.

EVENING WITH MIKE NICHOLS AND ELAINE MAY (Golden), revue.

FIORIELLO (Broadhurst), musical comedy, Tom Bosley, Pat Stanley.

MIRACLE WORKER (Playhouse), drama, Anne Bancroft, Patty Duke.

MUSIC MAN (Broadway), musical comedy.

MY FAIR LADY (Hellinger), musical comedy, Michael Allinson, Margot Moser.

PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT (Hayes), comedy drama, James Daly, Barbara Baxly, Robert Webber.

RHINOCEROS (Longacre), comedy drama, Eli Wallach, Zero Mostel.

SHOW GIRL (O'Neill), revue, Carol Channing.

SOUND OF MUSIC (Lunt-Fontanne), musical drama, Mary Martin.

TENDERLOIN (46th St.), musical comedy, Maurice Evans.

TOYS IN THE ATTIC (Hudson), drama, Robert Loggia, Maureen Stapleton.

UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN (Winter Garden), musical comedy.

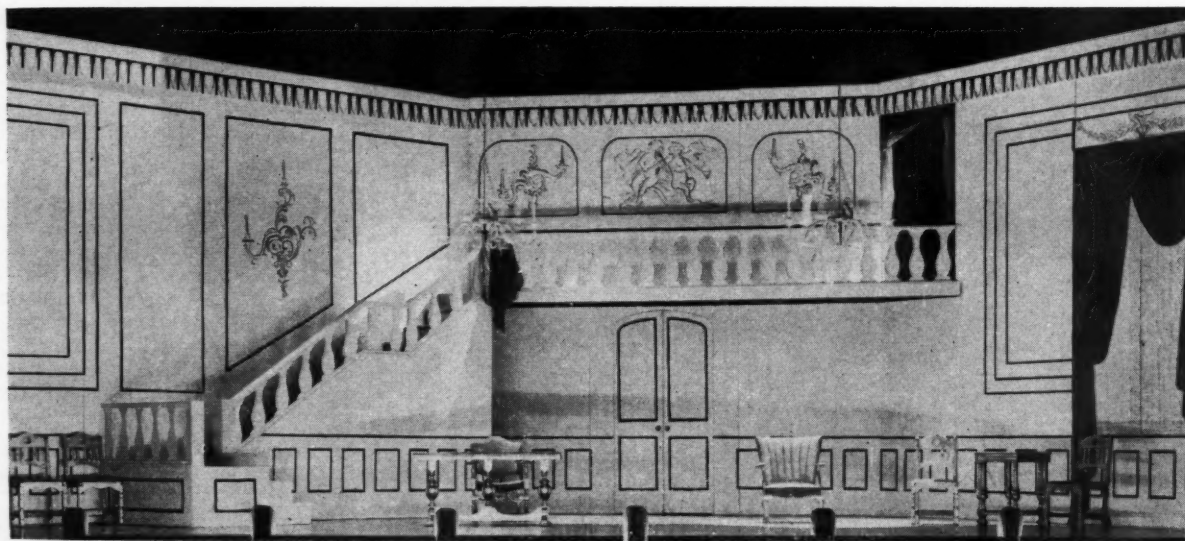
WILDCAT (Alvin), musical comedy, Lucille Ball.

Mssrs. Cat and Fox. Sets and costumes were designed by a talented art student, Keith Willett.

At our final party, it was sad to say goodbye to the seniors and to our advisor, who retires from drama this year. — *Lyle Carstens, President*

## CHARLESTON, W. VIRGINIA Troupe 121

The George Mavety Award is presented to the outstanding performer in the Senior Class play of Stonewall Jackson High School. The award had its origin in 1956 when George Mavety, then a student from Canada, was attending Stonewall. Mr. Mavety wanted to remain a part of Stonewall, and this originated the award. At his request the award was based on the following: three-fifths on contributions made during the rehearsal period and



Set for *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* or *The Would-Be Gentleman*, designed by Lyle Collins and directed by Florence Schwimley, Troupe 1351, Berkeley, Calif., High School



two-fifths on the actual performance. The recipient of the award is presented with a trophy and an all-expense paid trip to the drama festival in Ottawa, Canada. Mr. Mavety is now a teacher in Kingston, Ontario.

In February the Troupers and Thespians combined their efforts in the presentation of *Take Care of My Little Girl*. Two additional three-act plays were presented; they were *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *Thunder on Sycamore Street*. Thespian initiates were inducted before the student body in a formal spring ceremony. — John Merrifield, President

#### KENMORE, NEW YORK Troupe 108

Last year, Fall of 1959, a new high school opened in Kenmore. The "old" school, Troupe 108, became Kenmore West and the new one, Kenmore East. We kept the Thespian Troupe 108 with members of both schools as one Troupe this year. Officers were from both schools and the two sponsors, Miss Strong (West) and Miss Hughes (East) worked together.



My Three Angels, Troupe 551, San Diego, Calif., High School, William C. deLannoy, Sponsor 1959-60

Two events highlighted our year together. The first was a buffet supper at Jay Torrance's home after which we went to the Studio Theater (Buffalo's very well known Little Theater) to see *The Happiest Millionaire*. The second highlight and climax of the season was a banquet at Sarah Lawrence Tea Room. The new members furnished original entertainment and the Best Thespian was announced. On the way home we all lingered at the spot (marked by a plaque and American flag) where Teddy Roosevelt took the oath of office after McKinley's assassination in Buffalo.

Kenmore East has just recently acquired a new charter. Being close neighbors and old friends, we shall undoubtedly meet together sometime next year. — Maude Moore, President

#### CLEVELAND, OHIO Troupe 1616

Keeping in step with our motto, "Act well your part; there all the honor lies," Marshall's troupe 1616 produced four full-length plays during the 59-60 school year. The plays in-

## 1961 — REGIONAL CONFERENCES — 1961

- INDIANA** ..... Central High School, Muncie, Drucilla J. Stillwagon, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1537, April 22.
- MICHIGAN (Western)** ..... Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Margaret L. Meyn, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 455, Benton Harbor High School, March 25.
- MISSOURI** ..... Horton Watkins High School, St. Louis, James Striby, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1109, April 22.
- NEW JERSEY** ..... Atlantic City High School, Ruth E. French, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1085, April 29.
- NEW MEXICO** ..... Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico, Anne E. Shannon, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1174, Highland High School, Albuquerque, April 6, 7, 8.
- NEW YORK (Western)** ..... Drama Festival, State University of N.Y. Agricultural and Tech. Institute, Alfred, New York, Kathleen Wright, Program Chairman; Robert Timerson, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 1286, Trumansburg High School, May 3-7.
- NEW YORK (Hudson Valley)** ..... Horace Greeley High School, Chappaqua, John Sweet, Sponsor, Troupe 1224, Program Chairman, May 12.
- NEW YORK (Long Island)** ..... Simpson High School, Huntington, Clint Marantz, Sponsor, Troupe 603, Program Chairman; Charles L. Jones, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 861, Port Jefferson High School, May 13.
- OKLAHOMA** ..... Lawton High School, Lawton, Opal Ford, Sponsor, Troupe 935, Program Chairman; Maybelle Cenger, State Director and Sponsor, Troupe 822, Central High School, Oklahoma City, March 10, 11.
- PENNSYLVANIA, OHIO, MARYLAND, NEW JERSEY** ..... Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa., Jean E. Donahay, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 187, John A. Brashear Joint Senior High School, Brownsville, April 15.

cluded the following: *Best Foot Forward*, *Gaslight*, (*Angel Street*), *Pygmalion*, and *Auntie Mame*. This was a boom year for John Marshall because more than 200 students, 12½% of the school, participated in actual production. Among the eight one-act plays presented and the classwork this year, we included plays of G. B. Shaw, William Shakespeare, J. M. Barrie, and two original scripts. As part of our theater training, the troupe ushered for two five-night-run productions at Western Reserve University this spring.

With the aid of the dramatic class our thirteen remaining Thespians produced *The Madwoman of Chailot* on October 14, 1960. — Gary Ramsdell, President

#### BELLE CENTER, OHIO Troupe 1740

'Twas the night before the play; the recorder was broken; and the sound effect record was no good. What were we to do? The play called for Steve to get into the car, slam the door, and take off. Someone suggested using a real car. At first the idea seemed preposterous, but the more we thought about it the better it seemed.

Then came the night of the play, *Fair Exchange*, Steve said his last speech. As he ran out the door, the relay began. Our director signaled to someone at the window who signaled to the driver of the parked car. He slammed the door, turned on the ignition, and the gravel flew. The sound came through an open door. It worked!

When Steve returned, the car was parked a short distance from the door. With a flash light we signaled the driver. He skidded to a stop, turned off the ignition, slammed the door. Victory was ours! — Sylvia J. Boos, Reporter

#### SOUTH BEND, INDIANA Troupe 1464

"Purity Dean, you are finished!" growled the villainous Mortimer Frothingham in a tense scene of *Pure As the Driven Snow*. This old-fashioned "mellow" drama, which was the

spring project for Thespian Troupe 1464 of John Adams High School, was held in the school's little theater, and admission was by invitation only. The play was given for two reasons: as a means of expressing appreciation to the parents of Thespian members for the assistance they had given their sons and daughters in the promotion of school dramatics, and also as a very special, last show for the senior members of the troupe of which the cast was primarily cast. Underclassmen found *Pure As the Driven Snow* to be an excellent opportunity to gain "behind the scenes" experience as they managed all phases of production.

Informal arrangement of seating at tables, singing waiters, "between scenes" acts, and active audience participation in the form of cheers, hisses, and boos added to the melodramatic atmosphere. The cast, as well as the audience thoroughly enjoyed the play, and because it was so much fun to produce, it has been selected as the all-school production for next fall. — Carol Ann Schiller, Scribe

#### CLEVELAND, OHIO Troupe 1396

Illusions are an important part of the makeup of a play, especially in using the scenery to produce such effects as an upstairs downstairs, etc. You might say that all of this is small and unimportant, but let me tell you nothing could be as small as our stage. Where could you put a staircase and still have room for the play, let alone just part of a staircase when your biggest problem is a space of only two feet in which to do it and yet not clutter up the stage? In our major production of the year, *Jenny Kissed Me*, there was a call for a staircase, and as was mentioned above the problem again arose as to space. It was impossible for us to have anything solid that would often as not prevent an actor from making a clean entrance and avoid a fall so an illusion of some kind was the answer. Using paper and making a roll type shape, we gave the appearance of a banister and the beginning



Christmas Program, Troupe 124, Jefferson High School, Portland, Oregon, Melba Day Sparks, Sponsor 1959-60

of a staircase and the effect was so realistic that we decided to use more illusion even when no problem is involved to save time, cost, and use our imaginations. — *Bernadette Bunsey, Reporter*

#### BEAVER FALLS, PA. Troupe 2042

Presenting a children's matinee to pupils in the Beaver Falls Elementary Schools was a new experience for the Advanced Drama Class of our high school.

*The Red Shoes*, a fantasy by Robin Short, centers around a little orphan girl who's happiest when dancing. For this character we were fortunate to have in the Drama Department, Tamara Addison, who has studied dancing for twelve years including two summers spent studying in New York. She is currently with the Pittsburgh Ballet. Jemmo and Nels were played by the winners of the Senior Dramatics Award, Sandy Lenk, President of Chapter 2042, and Myron Brenner. Altogether the play was easy to cast.

We found that little children make a very good audience and, to our delight, enjoyed the presentation immensely. The play was also presented to the public in an evening performance and was received as warmly by the adults as by the children. — *Karen Emert, Reporter*

#### EXCELSIOR, MINN. Troupe 1596

The introduction of a drama class has sparked dramatic creativity for Troupe 1596. There has been more productions and more successful ones. The training received in drama class was first evident in the junior class play, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*. In January the Thespians and Drama class presented a Night of One-Acts, including *Riders to the Sea*, *Fog on the Valley*, and *Antic Spring*. Many Thespians had roles in an excellent performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

The most rewarding effort of the year was the senior class play, Dennis Holt's version of *Antigone*. This was the first tragedy presented at Minnetonka; many of the students were amazed to find themselves appreciating Greek tragedy. Numerous adults requested a repeat performance.

The initiation of twenty-one new Thespian members indicates increased enthusiasm and skill, and even brighter prospects for next year's dramatic activities under the direction and en-



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couragement of Miss Margaret Heinen. — *Dotty Bacon, President*

#### MERIDIAN, IDAHO Troupe 875

Troupe 875 proved that small schools can have an active drama department. *Our Town*, our first production, was presented early in November. One play usually concluded the drama activity for the year, but not this year! *The Tinder Box*, a children's play, was our next production. Troupe members were rightfully proud of their work on this play. They spent long hours after school designing and painting the numerous scenes for this children's fantasy. Our spring project was a festival of one-act plays. The drama bug spread like wild fire. Besides scheduled troupe activities, we assisted various other school organizations in producing a total of ten one-act plays.

Handicapped by a small number of students, limited theater facilities, and without a formal drama class, we were able to make this the most active year of drama our troupe has ever had. Major share of credit for our success goes to our sponsor, Jerry Keuter. We salute and thank him and all other sponsors who gave so freely of their time and talents for our benefits. — *Janet E. Fisk, Secretary*

#### MIAMI, FLORIDA Troupe 1513

Thespian Troupe 1513 of Miami Norland High School, assisted by the drama students, presented an invitational program for the purpose of showing the influences that have made the theater of today; and vividly portraying the different types and styles of drama in relation to other varied backgrounds.



A character study, *The Old Enchanter*, (Hugh Severance), *The Bad Children*, a Children's Theater production, Troupe 670, Wayne, Mich., Memorial High School, Letha A. Rice, Sponsor

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#### CHILDREN'S PLAY

(Continued from Page 21)

dren's plays that cannot be done and effectively done at almost no cost. It is often a matter of using some imagination and resourcefulness to get effects at minimal cost. Certainly any of the good plays may be produced as elaborately as the budget will allow, but let us not forget that expensive production in itself will not insure a good performance. Actually, many children's plays would suffer from over-elaborate production.

It is not by careless omission that I have failed to mention specific children's plays to illustrate characteristics of a good Children's Theater vehicle. The omission was intentional. It seems to me wiser to emphasize sound basic principles for selection with the expectation that those groups who are planning to produce a children's play will keep in mind these principles and then read many plays, all the while considering the specific situation in which the play is to be produced. It is also our hope that by keeping in mind some of the principles of good play selection for children, everyone will be discouraged from choosing some of the perennially-produced scripts that are too poor in quality to inflict on children. The best source I know of an annotated list of Children's Plays is that found in *Theater for Children* by Winifred Ward, published by The Children's Theater Press, 1958. This list is invaluable because it is selective; it is organized according to age appeal; and, of course, its chief value is that it is a listing by one who knows Children's Theater as few people in America know it.

The program included scenes from the following dramatic sketches: *The Lute Song*; *Saved from the Fate of Her Sister*, a melodrama; *Waiting for Lefty*; *Of Mice and Men*; *Rainmaker*; *Stage Door*; and *Our Town*.

We felt trying something different from the regular production would give us good experience and a better understanding of the theater. It proved to be a big success.

Also during the 1959-60 season we participated in such productions as *Harvey* and the Junior play, *Time Out for Ginger*. We also attended the annual drama festival held at the University of Miami.

This was the first year for our troupe and an extremely rewarding one. — *Barbara Rapchik, Scribe*



## ORIGINAL ORATORY

(Continued from Page 19)

threads of suspense toward an appropriate climax.

In the introduction of the oration arouse the attention of the audience at once by a striking example. Explain why the problem concerns all of us and why its solution cannot safely be delayed. Show how recent developments enhance the severity of the problem. Make clear the meaning and extent of the problem. Show why the failures to solve it constitute a crisis.

In the body of the speech develop the points which were brought out in the introduction. Reinforce the main points with examples and substantiation of the problem issue which you contend exists. Remember that you are urging action by the listener, so there is more of an emotional plea than appeal for belief.

Toward the conclusion there could be a suggestion or suggestions for a course of action, but a plan for action is less of the concern of the orator than a deep stirring of the emotions of the listeners.

### EULOGISTIC ORATORY

The format of the speech of eulogy would follow a chronological or biographical sequence with support and evidence introduced at the appropriate stages. It is one of the easiest of outlines to follow. This may be the reason why judges may feel that the speaker's composition requires less student effort than the problem-solving oration.

Typical requirements for the oration include:

- (1) A time limit of 10 to 15 minutes.
- (2) A limit of not more than 150 words of quoted material. (Oral credit should be given to the sources.)
- (3) The oration must be original with the student.

**Delivery.** With much practice and more time and effort the chief difference of work in oratory is the superior delivery. Without this excellence there is no point in trying original oratory as a speech activity. If a student can reach a pinnacle of oral delivery, he will likely be less willing to settle for indifferent delivery later. He will understand of course that this supreme effort in polished utterances will not be appropriate for types of speaking which are not delivered as an oration. This delivery based on proper use of the voice for meaning and emphasis excellence should aid him greatly in his speech education efforts. Variety of pitch, volume, and speed rate should bring out the ultimate in his ability. Bodily action can be carefully appraised and revised. If he ever reached the highest plateau of his ability, he has made a break through from mediocrity and partial proficiency in speaking which makes this activity worthwhile. Near perfection once attained is seldom forgotten. The need for it may be inter-

mittent, but it is a reserve source which could make the difference in the achievement of a personal goal or a social promotion. Some by-products of this "all out" effort may be worth many times its cost in labor. The exact pattern for you can't be spelled out in detail by someone other than yourself, but critics can help you realize your own potential in a manner which is peculiar and natural to you.

**The Use of Language.** We have alluded to the need for creative and imaginative construction of your speech. Avoid "like poison" the usual platitudes and worn out illusions and language glitter which often marks the insincere speaker. The day of ornate language for the sake of ornateness has gone from present usefulness. Don't model on great speeches given a generation or more ago. They served a purpose in their time, but speech standards now call for naturalness and belief of word usage and manner.

No one can properly write the speech for the student. He must bring to bear his entire educational background and apply it here. Many teachers will be able to help in suggestions and criticism. He is severely "on his own" as to the created speech. He should use all the available helps possible, but the product must be original. If not, then the student is more of a declaimer than an orator, and the reason for the activity has been perverted.

Where statistics are used, it would be best to use comparisons which clarify and attract interest. Analogies, epigrams, and other antithetic phrases and sentences help variety. Reasonable figures of speech indicate thoughtful prepara-

tion. Audiences appreciate the surprise elements if they contribute to the purpose.

**Memory.** This is one type of speaking where memorization is easiest to accomplish. Once the final best wording of the completed original oration is polished and accepted, the business of memorization begins. Probably the attempt to memorize the total script is better than learning it a paragraph at a time. However, the problem here is to remember ideas rather than words, in order to keep the spontaneity of extemporaneous speech. The mechanical and glib delivery is to be avoided. Freshness and naturalness is the goal of the original oratory student speaker.

Appearances before the school and other audiences will help memory as well as allow "shake down" and "trial run" opportunity to smooth out action, improve voice usage, and build memory confidence.

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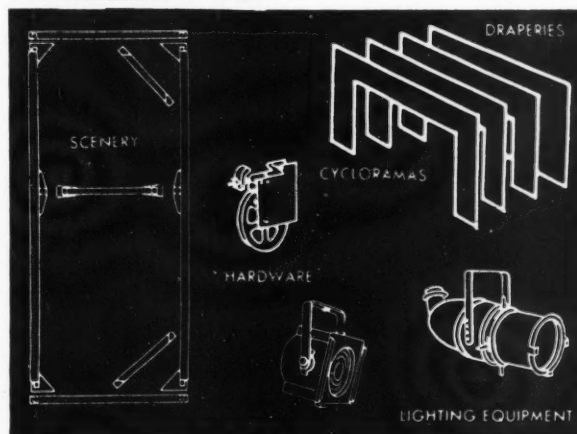
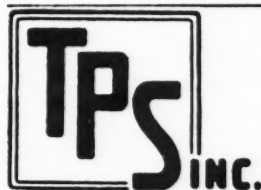
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## CECIL B. DE MILLE

(Continued from Page 15)

though a member of the "Trust" examined the film and diagnosed the problem. As a means of cutting costs, DeMille had bought a second-hand British machine for punching the holes along the edge of the negative. The British machine punched 65 holes per foot while American-made projectors were geared for 64 holes. As a result, the picture had jumped convulsively through the projector. By putting a new edge on the film, Lubin turned catastrophe into success.

The company's second production was a comedy, *Brewster's Millions*, directed by Apfel. The picture as previewed privately seemed anything but humorous and again the company apparently faced bankruptcy. At a public showing, however, the audience was convulsed. From this experience, DeMille developed the concept of the "sneak preview" before an actual audience as the true test of a film's effectiveness.

Recalling Dustin Farnum's stage success in *The Virginian*, DeMille selected it as his first solo effort as director in April, 1914. He had observed the cinematic innovations of D. W. Griffith whom he considered a "genius." He was learning too how the camera could transmit mood or emotion without resorting to graphic realism. For example, instead of showing the actual hanging of two cattle thieves, he photographed the shadows of the two bodies suspended from the impromptu gallows. Along with Griffith, DeMille was establishing the crude beginnings of cinematic art.

With the new company well-established, Lasky obtained the film rights to ten Belasco successes including *The Warrens of Virginia*, *Rose of the Rancho*, and *The Girl of the Golden West*. Another innovation was a new form of distribution of the Lasky-DeMille films. W. W. Hodkinson, a former telegrapher, salesman, and manager of an Ogden, Utah, movie theater, had organized a national distributing company which would guarantee annually 104 pictures to member theaters. Lasky was to furnish 30, Adolph Zukor promised 52, and the remaining would come from small independent producers. Hodkinson, on his way to sign the contracts in New York, passed a building named "Paramount Apartments" and found the name for his new company. For its trade-mark, he recalled a snow-capped peak in Utah's Wasatch Mountains, which he sketched encircling it with stars. Thus the familiar Paramount Pictures name and trade-mark was originated.

DeMille, after completing several films including *The Call of the North* (1914), notable for the first film appearance of Theodore Roberts (1861-1928), one of the great character actors of countless silent pictures, began filming *Rose of the Rancho* at the Lasky ranch in the San Fernando Valley. His leading lady

was Bessie Barriscale, a former stock company actress and the first feminine star of Lasky pictures. For the film, he had purchased an expensive Spanish saddle noting that not only would the real property help the actors, but also it could be photographed effectively. For the first time in the movies, real properties—a technique acquired from the master of American stage realism, Belasco,—gained significance. Unlike other directors who "ground out pictures like sausages," according to Lasky, DeMille "was much more painstaking, and as his flair for sweeping dramatic spectacle developed, his shooting schedule stretched to five to six to seven and then eight weeks." His innovations, even though costly, were improving the quality of pictures. In *The Warrens of Virginia* he draped the windows with black velvet so as to film interior night scenes without the anachronism of glaring sunlight destroying the illusion. By manipulating sunlight reflectors, DeMille pioneered in varying light intensity during individual scenes. To aid his actors, he introduced mood music in dramatic scenes to counteract the distractions of the usual hustle-and-bustle of movie-making. DeMille states, in his autobiography, his philosophy in regard to actors and the camera:

You cannot lie to a camera. That is in part what I mean by the motion picture's ability to photograph thought. Until an actor learns to use his eyes and the slightest flickering change of facial expression to project what is in the mind of the character he is playing, the motion picture audience will not believe him. . . .

Film-making to DeMille was the process of "bringing the merciless eye of the camera within five feet of the windows of his (the actor's) soul."

DeMille too considered the story as "the essential ingredient of a successful picture." Lasky, in accord with this policy, bought many plays directly from authors, then novels, and eventually established a scenario department. Cecil's brother, William, a successful playwright, joined the company in 1914 and remained in Hollywood to become a successful director-producer and founder of the Drama Department at the University of Southern California. William's secretary, Anne Bauchens, pioneered in another area. Beginning as a film cutter, her dramatic sense and ability to adapt herself to the DeMille sense of cinema in uniting the isolated scenes into a complete film play, led to the more dignified title of "film editor." She edited all of DeMille's films after 1918, and in 1940 was the first woman to receive an Academy Award for her work.

In 1916 Lasky had merged with Adolph Zukor's Famous Players and with Hodkinson quietly ousted from Paramount Pictures, Adolph Zukor was in complete control of the company. "C.B." was little affected by these changes. Always the showman, dressed in whipcord riding breeches, leather boots, open

shirt, colorful headgear, with megaphone in hand, he directed his first "big" picture, *Joan the Woman* (1916), costing \$307,976.26. In it he introduced his basic formula for a successful picture: an absorbing personal story told against a background of great historical events.

In the post-World War I period, sensitive to the changing morals of the times, DeMille directed a series of pictures notable for their *risque* themes and the glorification of the American bathroom. In *Don't Change Your Husband* (1919), *Male and Female* (1919), *Forbidden Fruit* (1921), and *Fool's Paradise* (1922), he was criticized for his "disgusting debauchery." He justified his films by insisting that his profession was "making pictures for popular entertainment" and "to produce films for one's own pleasure or the admiration of a small coterie is honorable, but it doesn't draw the mass audience." He was receiving \$260,000 per picture, and he averaged three films a year.

Still, in answer to the critics, he sponsored a newspaper contest for an original film idea. The result was *The Ten Commandments* (1923), one of the most successful pictures of all time. Unlike the 1956 version, he used a Biblical prologue to a modern story dealing with two brothers: one who keeps the commandments and one who breaks them. The prologue introduced his film version of the Exodus under Moses, played by Theodore Roberts, and the crossing of the Red Sea. Even in his autobiography, he does not reveal the secret of the magnificent "special effects" created by his staff under Gordon Jennings in filming this spectacular incident. The film cost almost \$1,500,000 and grossed over twice that amount. Following its success, he established his own studios and with the aid of a financier, Jeremiah Milbank, he began his favorite film, *King of Kings*, which has been shown somewhere in the world every day since its New York premiere on April 19, 1927. Opening with a lavish party at Magdala's home where taunted by her guests because Judas has found the company of a wandering carpenter more pleasant than hers, she goes to the carpenter's house. DeMille thus avoided the charge of being sacrilegious because the audience would identify the Biblical characters as human beings experiencing basic human emotions. With H. B. Warner in the title role, the film cost \$2,265,283.

While many of the Hollywood pioneers resisted the coming of sound, DeMille accepted it immediately and directed his first talking film *Dynamite* (1929) for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. His films were models for the latest in women's fashions and home furnishings, and the plots reflected the changing manners and morals. From 1919 to 1926 he was probably the most influential director in Hollywood, copied and envied by his more artistic and creative colleagues.

## GANGWAY!

(Continued from Page 14)

made the entire action take place in a warehouse of a junk dealer. We used a background of black drapes at Lynwood and flooded the stage with all manner of junk. (What a mad time for a teacher who can devise an "elaborate" set at almost no cost!) The only pieces of scenery which needed to be built were a large sliding warehouse door and a smaller conventional door which led to an offstage office. We used tall storage shelves and racks of clothes and stacks of old tires and all kinds of odds and ends to form the walls. (Parents and students were eager to contribute to the "design" of our set!) Wooden crates of various sizes served the dual purpose of providing acting levels and seating facilities. Color was introduced by the clothes that hung on the racks and by many brilliantly-hued pillows pyramided in the back of the warehouse.

We knew the exact types of teenagers we wanted to write about. In my classroom experience, most of my problems have arisen in dealing with some of the leaders of the school who felt that the rules were made for everyone else, but not for them. They felt themselves above the rules. They did their damage with a keen mind, not a switchblade. As Mr. Ross expressed it, we were interested in depicting the behavior of the "intellectual demon."

Tryouts for *Gangway!* were held the first week of school. Anyone in the Junior class who was eligible by reason of scholarship and citizenship could try out. This particular class proved itself to be a gold mine of both musical and dramatic talent. (However, our allowance for a good actor who might not be able to sing paid off when one singing role was delivered by reading the lyrics to the music.) So many students showed up for the tryouts that Miss Peterson (who acted as music director) and I decided to double cast most of the principal roles. This gives more students a chance to perform and provides insurance against illness or unforeseen mishap to a member of the cast. (It also doubles the work for the directors!) All rehearsals were held after school. Student directors worked with the alternate casts. (You'd be amazed at the quality of accomplishment you get when high school students are given such an important responsibility.)

As soon as the word was out that *Gangway!* had been written and was to be produced, drama students who had graduated from Lynwood High began to volunteer their services. One former student, Barry Dunn, Class of '54, now a professional dance instructor, offered to do the choreography for the show. This he did with infinite skill. The number, *It's Tough To Be We*, which had been written to be sung

and danced to a soft shoe routine, proved the hit of the show. (The formula was simple: get two wonderful kids who ooze charm and who are enjoying themselves, give them some old fashioned soft shoe rhythm and some amusing lyrics, and then just sit back and let the audience do the rest.) Variety in the dances was provided by a snappy swing number and a modern dance that was a dead pan spoof of beatnik coffee house jazz. (And the kids laughed harder than the adults.) But, by far the most beautiful choreography was realized in the modern ballet called *Lonely Pillow* in which dancers, dressed in plain black leotards, voiced the loneliness of a girl without a boy as they swayed and whispered their longing to the inanimate colored pillows they held as they danced. (Sure, it's sentimental, but high school kids are the most sentimental people on earth.)

*Gangway!*, as the name suggests, tells the story of a teenage gang. The members of this gang are no juvenile delinquents — most kids aren't. Instead, they are the aggressive, vital, nonconformists of the school who rebel at obeying rules. Their nonconformity results in their being declared ineligible to participate in the school musical. As the show opens, we find them holding a protest meeting in the warehouse of Oscar Hammer, dealer in junk (his son is one of the group). They decide to form a gang, elect a leader, and to produce their own show. Their brash self-confidence is demonstrated in the opening production number as they declare, *We've Got Talent*. They glory in their exile from student affairs in another defiant number, *We're Ineligible*. The boys and girls list only one qualification for membership in their gang — to be eligible for the gang, one must be ineligible for school activities. They will have no rules and regulations in their gang, only a leader who will direct their play. But, in electing a leader, they encounter their first difficulty when the voting produces a tie, and they find themselves with not one, but two leaders. The battles which ensue between the capable Johnny Prince and the spirited Jinx Thompson complicate all the rehearsals. And what is worse for both of them is that they are in love. The situation is confused even more when the two teachers responsible for making the kids ineligible for the school production, music teacher Maureen Stokes and drama director Arthur Masters, cannot agree on the methods of handling young people. In the duet, *They're Only Kids*, they state their divergent philosophies of education as Miss Stokes says, "It's not surrender just to be tender" and Mr. Masters answers, "Pamper and pet — look what you get." Both agree, however, that "They're just a bunch of normal kids."

It soon becomes evident that no group can function efficiently without

some kind of regulations. Rehearsals turn into open battles, with members of the gang taking sides as first Johnny and then Jinx attempt to direct the show. But it is not until the gang find itself in serious trouble, with an unknown member of the group accused of theft, that they begin to show signs of potential maturity. It is old Oscar Hammer, the uneducated junk man, who brings home the message of the play in his musical plea, *You Gotta Be Honest*. There is no preaching, just a simple realization that men have to learn to live with one another and follow the rules that they, themselves, have provided for their mutual welfare.

*Gangway!* played to standing room only for the two nights of its run. It made a lot of money for the Junior class (remember that the cost of production was held at an absolute minimum). It gave more than sixty young people a chance to show their talents. It provided three theater-minded teachers an opportunity to speak dramatically and musically. We think their message got across. But regardless of the message, *Gangway!* was a successful venture and an exciting adventure because, to quote Associated Press reporter Jim Dickenson (the critic who reviewed the play), "Everyone, including the cast and an audience that packed the high school auditorium, had a ball."

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## REVERIES

(Continued from Page 13)

Naturally, new clubs must have projects to help give them an aim. Ours came most logically. We had been in contact with two of our former students regarding their careers. We thought we could use their information to benefit our teaching. Why not make a project of this sort of thing? Why not a "Hall of Fame," as it were, for our own graduates who had "made good" in theater?

We call it the Central Celebrity Corner. To date there are seven members. As the idea grows, we expect to add more of our students to the membership. We have contacted each of them personally, made them honorary members of Stage Door, and asked for an autographed photo for our Celebrity scrapbook.

In most cases we have received a personal memento along with the pictures, usually something related to their current positions. (For instance, Ben Janney sent us the opening night playbill for *Romanoff and Juliet* and an autographed playbill by Sir Laurence Olivier when he was in *The Entertainer*.)

This project has done two things, mainly, as we see it. First, it has helped our students who are in school now become more aware of the possibilities in show business, and second, it has helped maintain a high interest in current happenings in the field of dramatic arts. We believe one of the best examples

of this was when Muncie's John Beeson appeared here during our college Arts Festival at the time they presented his opera, *In the Sweet Bye and Bye*. The enthusiasm of our high school group for this program was tremendous.

Here is the name of a young man who helped to organize another of our projects. Although not related to drama, it is one of service. As we have so many students here (2400 in grades ten to twelve), we established a guide service for new sophomores their first day of school to aid in their adjustment to a new environment.

With "headquarters" in the front hall, new sophomores reported to us by their counseling groups, and our guides took them on a tour of the building, pointing out important rooms and offices with which they should become familiar, and indicating to them where their classrooms were located. Twenty-seven of our members took part in this project, and some 800 new sophomores took part in the tours.

An old playbill reminds me how slowly but surely our group grew, and with it, increased interest on the part of the students and faculty. After our presentation of *The Curious Savage*, we received dozens of letters from people in the community who had come to see it. Many felt our presentation was improved over the Civic Theater production of three years before. We recognize that part of this was due, perhaps,

to the fact that a high school group was doing this type of play, and did not overplay the roles for laughs. (Some students in English classes wrote critical evaluations of the play — it was not a required viewing at all — and the general consensus was that they appreciated the fact that we gave them credit for being able to understand this sort of play, and they behaved accordingly.) Faculty members felt that at long last they were seeing "adult" entertainment, and not the too often perhaps light, frothy only-the-icing high school production. We followed this with *Seven Nuns at Las Vegas*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Good Neighbors*, and *Speaking of Murder*.

Interest was high enough and had been maintained long enough that in December 1958, we installed a new troupe of Thespians. This group was full of ginger and spice and tended to "walk in where angels fear to tread." They wanted to do *Our Town*. Suffice it to say, we did it. It was entirely student-directed and produced.

More than 100 students (not all Thespians of course) participated in the play, and spent a combined 2,000 hours to put it over. With only a few hitches in lighting (our central lighting system went "kaput" the night before the play and we had to use a lot of last-minute not-quite-adequate substitutes) the play went off rather well.

Perhaps one of the things of which we may be most proud is the fact that our young people are learning theater manners. We are teaching these in our classes, by word-of-mouth from cast and crew members to their friends, and via playbills. They are learning to return to their seats when the lights flash as a warning the act is about to begin. They are also becoming aware that the best time to discuss what to wear to the prom Saturday night is *not* during the play, and they are beginning to accept the fact that ushers are there to show them to their seats! (How many times have we heard, "I can find my own way, thanks!")

This name reminds us of the ushers when we did *Our Town*. As House Manager, he had the girls wear black socks and shoes, dark skirts, and middy blouses. The boys wore short-sleeved shirts, string ties, knickers, knee-socks, and dark shoes. At first one may think the ushers would object, but believe it or not, this seemed to make them feel more a part of the total production, and it also served to put the audience into a frame of mind in keeping with the play.

My thoughts flew on, for names of the season just past were there on the wooden frames. (Here, indeed, was the "new age," for we had tried to impress upon them the value of refraining from writing on the canvas. Too often it showed through or made holes in it. Writing on the frame was a compromise.)

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Then we remembered another idea. Why not a special canvas "flat" for just such a purpose? In looking over the names, we are quite certain there will be some among these that future generations will want to see, too. For these are our future professionals — in all walks of life. And here they will learn of many facets of life and living which they will take away with them; but here they will also leave a part of themselves — and their name on a piece of old canvas is just the smallest part. *What fun it would be to look at it five, ten, twenty years from now — to look at it and remember.*

And who are these people—the "stars" of the future? Will it be Lana, Joe, Jim, Mike, Harold, Tom, or Jane? We can not say, for we do not know; but some seem to show much promise.

We do not have all the school talent in our Stage Door and Thespian groups, but the Stage Door and Thespian members are all talent. (Please forgive an old teacher for being so proud of her students.) During the past school year, twenty-two of our members made over fifty appearances in programs ranging from spirituals to jazz and from state church conventions to dances.

Three acts which have gained a great deal of popularity to date are Miss Naiia Keihn, acrobat, and The Continentals and the Counts of Rhythm, a singing group and combo. Naiia has toured throughout the United States and Canada, appearing on programs with stars ranging from Homer & Jethro to The Four Lads.

The Continentals and the Counts of Rhythm often appear together as a group. They are young men between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. All Central students, they have travelled throughout a wide section of this part of the Midwest. Late last spring representatives from a recording company came to the school to make a recording of the boys. Working together they recorded seven numbers, and two of these are now out for publication. (And as if that day were not exciting enough, imagine how we felt when we looked in our mailbox and found a note saying to "call Myron McCormick at six o'clock." He was in town and had taken the time to contact us.)

"The proof is in the pudding," so they say. At our second annual Honor Awards Banquet last year, fifty-three drama students were honored for the work they had done during the past year. Invited to make the presentation of certificates and awards were school, college, and community dignitaries, all of whom were or are active in some field of dramatic arts. (Incidentally, many of these same individuals are honorary members of Thespians.)

And here is the name of the young man who won last year's Chester for outstanding drama work in all areas.

In the two years he was active, he was stage manager for *Blithe Spirit*, took the lead in *Speaking of Murder*, assisted in several of our community performances, participated in Civic Theater, was sergeant-at-arms of Stage Door, president of Thespians, and director of *Our Town*.

We are very proud of all our youngsters. Those we've mentioned here are only a few representatives of the fine group we have. It is our understanding that this type of program done by high school students on this scale is one of the largest undertakings of its kind in the country. It has all been done by the young men and women whose names appear on the canvas, and it is these and others like them who will keep the spirit of the dramatic arts going.

All these thoughts come to me now on a rainy Saturday afternoon while I am alone. Standing here, a strange feeling surrounds me . . . a feeling that comes when one is surrounded by darkness and the emptiness of a large enclosure. The rain splashes against the window pane and trickles down into little puddles on the sills. A faint, resounding click tells me the janitor is somewhere on a lower hall and has just dropped his broom on the cement floor. The sound startles me; not so much because it is unexpected as because it sets my thoughts flying, and I realize I am on a not-so-deserted stage after all.

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# BRIEF VIEWS

By WILLARD FRIEDERICH



**CHILDREN'S THEATRE** by Jed J. Davis and Mary Jane Watkins. 1960, Harpers; 416 pp.

This new book is one of the finest on children's theater, and may just probably be the finest, especially from the point of view of usefulness and overall coverage. It is a complete blue print of the production of a play for children's audiences (as distinguished from creative dramatics, emphasizing the development of the young workers in the play), from the selection or writing of the script, through casting, designing and mounting (including even the directions for making the ever-present spinning wheel), to directing the show. Other extremely helpful chapters cover the problems of organizing, booking, selling, and managing a single performance or a tour, including supervising the house. But perhaps the most helpful single portion of the entire book is a list of 120 recommended children's plays with all the necessary information on characters, settings, and any special technical or acting problems contained in the script. The philosophy upon which the book is built is completely in harmony with the previous standard works on either good theater *per se* or children's theater in particular.

**HOW TO PRODUCE THE PLAY: THE COMPLETE PRODUCTION HANDBOOK** by John Wray and Margaret Mary Young. 1960, Dramatic Pub. Co.; 96 pp.

This 8 x 11 looseleaf book is concerned with the technical aspects of producing a play: backstage organization; designing, building, and coloring the setting; props and furniture; sound effects; costumes and make-up; and lighting. Its keynote is practicality, for it summarizes the workable techniques evolved by the authors in about a quarter of a century of successful community theater production. The text and line drawings describe many standard practices, but also often advocate many that may be workable but are far from standard. Some suggestions make one wonder if what is gained warrants the risk: for example, why fit the rails between the stiles of the flat instead of vice versa (this necessitates gliders on the bottom edge of the flat to keep the raw ends of the stiles from splitting out when the flat is dragged across the floor), or why risk the splitting of six-inch pieces of 1 x 4 corner blocks when plywood is so safe and reasonable enough in price? On the other hand, practices such as stapling the canvas on the flat and abandoning the gluepot seem much more advantageous and profitable. The same is true of such suggestions as building the window right into the flat opening and papering the set (though using a paper dutchman sounds less desirable for sets that must endure any pressures or strains like slamming doors, etc.). If the advice to print actual hotel stationery and menus sounds too much like an echo from Belasco, other hints on making properties will be welcomed. To the beginner, however, the chapters on make-up and lighting may not prove too useful, for the descriptions of what results to strive for are not effectively backed up with concrete directions on how to achieve them. The kind of details and illustrations provided in the earlier chapters on scenery are badly needed here. With a teacher to provide some of these supplementary specific details, however, this brief book might be a good start for a beginning high school class in technical theater. Certainly, in the amateur theater, often hamstrung by outworn and indefensible traditions, the concept that "what works is right" has much to recommend it, especially when it saves money, time, and work.

**POINTERS ON PRODUCING THE SCHOOL PLAY** by Helen Louise Miller. 1960, Plays, Inc.; 116 pp.

"A simple 'how-to' book on play production for part-time drama directors working with low budgets," this little book does not pretend to be more than a collection of practical tips that came from years of experience by the author in directing high school dramatics projects. Brief chapters treating choosing, casting, and directing the play are followed by suggestions for simplified costuming, make-up, and properties. Most of the advice rings a familiar bell, but, occasionally, one stumbles over such suggestions as the one that insists that actions should not "kill" the words: "Instead of having an actor speak while crossing the stage, have him cross and then deliver his line; get up or sit down *before* or *after* the line, *not* on the line itself." The inexperienced director will not find this a very complete guide for managing the assignment of the assembly or junior play; but, on the other hand, he may turn up bits of practical advice that don't always appear in other more complete theory books.

**THE STAGE AND THE SCHOOL** by Katharine Anne Ommann. 3rd Ed., 1960, McGraw-Hill; 530 pp.

It seems hard to believe that ten years have elapsed since the second revision of this book. This third revision is indeed a thorough one. Some of the book is entirely new, bringing such subjects as television and modern American theater up to date; much is completely rewritten, and parts of the previous edition have been dropped. The format remains the same: an analysis of the drama, radio and television, and motion pictures from the points of view of their history, structure, type, style, acting, rehearsing, directing, technical production, and evaluation. As before, there are literally hundreds of exercises, scenes, and projects for the student. One of the most welcomed changes is the inclusion of innumerable photographs, including a "picture essay" of the progressive stages of the production of O'Neill's *A Touch of the Poet*. Appendices include a short play script, a list of recommended high school plays, an extensive bibliography, a glossary of terms, and some notes on professional careers in the entertainment world. This book always had the best and most complete coverage of the theater arts in the high school textbook field, and the revision more than helps it maintain its place.

**STAGE MAKEUP** by Richard Corson. 3rd Ed., 1960, Appleton-Century-Crofts; 354 pp.

Here is another well-known book whose revision is a far cry from the original edition. Thorough reorganization of materials has resulted in the expansion of such sections as the charted comparisons of brands of makeup colors (jumped from 79 color to 196) and the chapter on hair (including directions for making wigs and mustaches). The addition of over fifty illustrations and of much recent information on the comparatively new materials such as latex and plastics and the inclusion of a new chapter on physiognomy are especially provocative. Perhaps the finest single improvement is a series of fifteen plates that contain more than 275 drawings showing the changes in male and female hair styles (including beards and mustaches) from the Egyptian era to the present — all these with verbal descriptions and suggestions as to color, dressing, foundations, and trimming for the hair-dos. The principles of the book remain the same, but the teaching approach is now much more logical and workable, starting with the study of the actor's own

face and of corrective makeup and finally ending with character and non-realistic makeups. This always was one of the most popular books on makeup, but this revision puts it well in the running for first place among them all.

**COMMUNITY THEATRE** by Robert E. Gard and Gertrude S. Burley. 1959, Duell, Sloan, and Pearce; 182 pp.

This book briefly traces the short history of the community theater in America: the earliest experiment was around the turn of the last century, but the term itself first appeared in 1917, when it was defined as "any organization not primarily educational in its purpose, which regularly produces drama on a noncommercial basis and in which participation is open to the community at large." Aside from these few pages and a list of representative community theaters in America, however, the bulk of the book is devoted to a recording of conversations with fourteen men who have figured prominently in the history of this activity, either in the past or present. Several names, such as Allen Crafton, John Wray Young, and Frederick McConnell, for example, are well-known to almost anyone interested in theater today. Out of their conversations come brief tidbits explaining typical yearly programs, frequent psychological and materialistic obstacles in the programs, workable methods of organization and management, common goals and achievements, and so on.

**DRAMA FOR WOMEN** by Alison Graham-Campbell and Frank Lambe. 1960, G. Bell and Sons; 160 pp.

This little book is aimed primarily at the numerous women's organizations who participate in England's prolific community theater program and festivals. Though in America the shortage of male actors is a frequent nuisance, we probably do not have too many producing groups made up exclusively of women. That the problem does exist at times, however, is certainly borne out by your reviewer's recent enjoyable experience as critic judge for the well-known Chicago Drama Festival, where over half of the plays were from high schools for girls only. For groups in such predicaments, this book gives several good pointers on such knotty situations as selecting plays for all-female casts, achieving contrasts in characterizations, handling production and stagecraft jobs that may be too much for the weaker sex, attempting male impersonations, and rewriting male roles into female roles. Much of the book discusses the more common aspects of play production, however; and, because the small size of this book does not allow for too much detail, this general information will usually be covered to more satisfaction in other sources.

**A PLAYERS HANDBOOK OF SHORT SCENES**, edited by Samuel Selden. 1950, Holiday House; 201 pp.

Prof. Selden has selected twenty-six scenes from twelve of Shakespeare's plays, largely the tragedies and history plays, for use by student actors. The scenes contain directions for acting, suggesting possible vocal, physical, and psychological interpretations, as well as textual notes for understanding the lines. The majority are duo-scenes, but some are soliloquies and others involve anywhere from three to eight characters. Would that the brief notes on acting Shakespeare were more detailed and concrete and, thus, helpful!

**TALE WAGGERS** by Joyce R. Ingalls. 1958, Walter Baker; 70 pp.

These fifteen monologues for both boys and girls about teen-agers of their contemporary world might also prove useful to some students for class or public projects. Language and characterization are pretty simple but usually fairly natural. All are concerned with humorous or light situations and character traits; a few that delve more deeply into more serious matters would give the collection balance.

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